

# Arlington County

# 2014 Annual Report

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER



DECEMBER 2014



A R L I N G T O N  
VIRGINIA

## ***Arlington County Vision***

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*“Arlington will be a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community with secure, attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important.”*

*Adopted by the Arlington County Board January 26, 2002*



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## MEMBERS OF THE 2014 ARLINGTON COUNTY BOARD



*(Left to Right) Member J. Walter Tejada, Member John E. Vihstadt, Chairman Jay Fisette, Vice Chairman Mary Hynes and Member Libby Garvey*



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## ***ARLINGTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP***

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COUNTY MANAGER

***OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER***

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DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER

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MARSHA ALLGEIER  
WILFREDO CALDERON  
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**MICHELLE COWAN**  
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**MARCY FOSTER**  
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## **ARLINGTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

### **2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

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I am pleased to present our 2014 Annual Report, a review of the County's accomplishments and notable achievements during the calendar year. We have much to celebrate this year, as you will see in this snapshot of our major focus areas for 2014.

One of the most notable characteristics of our work is the amount of interdepartmental collaboration involved in each project. That is why rather than recounting the achievements of individual departments or agencies, instead this report presents our efforts in the major areas of economic, fiscal, and environmental sustainability; social safety net functions; civic engagement and inclusion; capital projects; collaborative efforts with the school system; public safety and more.

Our mission is to provide services – to all who live, work or visit – that enhance the quality of people's lives and maintain Arlington as an attractive place to live or do business. It is a lofty goal, but we are up to the challenge. I am indebted to our dedicated County staff, who often go above and beyond the call of duty to serve our community – thank you.

Financially, for the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, we maintained our triple-triple-A bond rating, which allows the County to borrow or finance major projects at the lowest possible rates. This in return provides greater resources for other critical services.

And we had a few bumps along the way. After much deliberation, the County Board voted in November to cancel the Arlington-Fairfax streetcar program. We remain committed to supporting the important neighborhoods of Columbia Pike, Crystal City and Pentagon City. There's much more to come on this in the coming months.

We earned a number of national awards and accolades during the year, including Top 7 "Intelligent Community" in the world – one of only two U.S. communities to achieve this honor. We were also named a Top 10 Digital County. The American Planning Association honored our Community Energy Plan with its National Planning Achievement Award in Environmental Planning, and we made Livablity.com's list of best places to live. Salon.com called Arlington the "suburb of the future," citing our sustainable urban development.

Overall, 2014 was an exciting and dynamic year, with both highs and lows, but thanks to the support of our whole community, we continue to provide high-quality services to the Arlington that we love.



ARLINGTON COUNTY MANAGER  
BARBARA M. DONNELLAN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara M. Donnellan".

Barbara M. Donnellan  
Arlington County Manager

# Arlington County Government

## 2014 Annual Report

### SOCIAL SAFETY NET

*Arlington is a desirable community offering diverse employment opportunities, well-regarded schools, highly sought after residential neighborhoods, and a wealth of amenities and community services. This desirability, however, puts increasing pressure on those with limited resources. The County's commitment to providing social safety net services helps to address this challenge. These efforts and more are testament to the County's commitment to its vision of Arlington as an inclusive community in which every individual is important.*

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

##### Nearly 400 Units Added to Affordable Housing Inventory

Housing specialists define affordable housing as housing for which the resident pays no more than 30 percent of his or her income. Committed Affordable Housing units (CAFs) make up a sizable percentage of such housing in Arlington and are subject to legally binding agreements to remain affordable to low-and-moderate income residents for a specified period.

According to the *2013 Affordable Housing Study Preliminary Data Report*, by the end of June 2013, Arlington had 6,622 CAFs, which accounted for 14 percent of the County's rental stock. By the end of November 2014, the County added nearly 400 new CAFs with the developers and property owners of six developments agreeing to rent the units at an affordable rate from 30 to 60 years.

In January, the County Board approved two new development projects that, combined, provided 82 CAFs. One was Marymount University's plan to replace its eight-story "Blue Goose" facility, at

1000 N. Glebe Road, with a 267-unit residential building with 11 CAFs committed to remain affordable for 30 years. The other was the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing's Springs Apartments in Buckingham, which added another 71 affordable units committed for 60 years.

In addition, during that time, the developer of the Founder's Square project met the affordable housing condition for the Site

Plan approved in 2008 with the provision of 15 CAFs at the apartment building now known as The View.

In April, AHC Inc. received approval for an Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) loan to purchase the Serrano Apartments on Columbia Pike. In return, AHC agreed to reserve 196 of the apartments as 60-year CAFs. In July, the County Board approved the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Flats that will provide six affordable units in Clarendon for 30 years. To complete the list, in November the Board approved another AHIF loan to support AHC's acquisition of Spectrum Apartments located at 5055 Chesterfield Road, which provided an additional 80 committed affordable units for 60 years.



*An artist rendering of the Springs Apartment building that will provide 71 committed affordable housing units*

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## **County Leverages Loan Program to Fund Affordable Housing**

Arlington's Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) is a low interest loan program available to developers who build or preserve affordable housing in the County. Since 1988, the County has leveraged AHIF loans to create the majority of nearly 7,000 affordable rental units. The

program is a revolving fund, replenished by loan repayments or contributions. The trend continued in 2014, as the County Board endorsed more than \$25.1 million in AHIF loans to preserve 288 Arlington affordable housing units. In addition, developers contributed nearly \$3 million to the fund as part of the community benefits package associated with new development.

In January, the County Board approved a \$7.82 million AHIF loan to the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing to help finance the Springs Apartment building in Buckingham. In April, AHC, Inc. received approval for a \$16.5 million AHIF loan to help purchase the Serrano Apartments at 5535 Columbia Pike. The loan's conditions call for AHC to offer 196 of the apartments as Committed Affordable Units (CAFs) for 60 years. The Wesley Housing Development Corporation received approval for an \$812,000 AHIF loan in July to refinance and renovate the William Waters Apartments at 2008 N. Adams St. The complex offers 21 CAFs, all committed to be available for rent at affordable rates for 60 years at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). In 2014, the AMI for a four-person household in Arlington was \$107,000; a similar size household at 60 percent AMI is \$64,200 annually.

The County also received a \$275,565 AHIF contribution from Marymount University in



*Community engagement is a hallmark of the Affordable Housing Study*

January as part of the conditions for redeveloping its facility at 1000 N. Glebe Road, and \$582,800 from the developers of the new development at 2401 and 2407 Wilson Blvd. In addition, the new owners of the Joule condominiums building contributed \$2 million to the fund to satisfy an outstanding site plan condition.

## **Affordable Housing Study Nearing Completion**

The County began work on a multi-year Affordable Housing Study in 2012 to formulate a community vision for affordable housing. The study's purpose is to lead the development of updated housing principles, goals, targets, strategies and priorities for the Affordable Housing Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

This year saw the County and the working group making progress in several areas towards meeting its spring 2015 target date for presenting the final report to the County Board. This work included conducting a housing needs survey of 1,744 Arlington residents, convening focus groups, interviewing target populations to better understand their housing needs, and completing an assessment of the current strategies/program approaches to affordable housing in Arlington. They also reviewed best practices, concluded a housing needs analysis report quantifying current and future needs and hosted two well-attended community events to involve the greater public.

The Affordable Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan, once completed, will lay out the County's long-term affordable housing policy. An accompanying implementation framework will detail how the County will achieve the elements' goals and objectives. The County also will provide a monitoring and evaluation plan to establish reporting requirements and identify the specific indicators for measuring the County's progress toward meeting the element's goals.

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## **Public Land for Public Good –Another Approach to Provide Housing**

The County Board last December instructed the County Manager to identify three to five publicly owned sites "with the greatest potential for redevelopment" in the next 10 years that could incorporate new affordable homes. This led to the Public Land for Public Good initiative.

The County Manager convened an internal staff working group to undertake a preliminary evaluation of publicly-owned sites to determine whether they are suitable for multifamily development given, among other things, their location and neighborhood context, applicable land use and zoning regulations, and transportation access.

Six months later, in May, the Manager identified eight County-owned properties that met the Board's criteria. The recommendations resulted from an analysis of 678 County and APS land parcels. The manager advised dividing the sites in two tiers.

Tier 1 includes Rosslyn Highlands Park/Fire Station #10, Courthouse Square and Plaza, land adjacent to Lee Gardens apartments (North Woodbury Park), and Gables North Rolfe Street. Tier 2 includes Fire Station #8, the Edison Complex, Lubber Run and land adjacent to Jennie Dean Park.

All Tier 1 sites are currently in the planning process and the inclusion of affordable housing is under consideration. Tier 2 locations, while identified in the Capital Improvement Plan for future studies, are not subject to any current planning processes. County staff, however, will develop timelines for special planning studies for each site to evaluate their feasibility for a proposed use or uses.

Additionally, the Long Range Planning Committee is set to present its recommendations to the County Board in December for proceeding on the development of the Public Land Site Evaluation Guidelines, and a process for determining how to balance public priorities on County-held land.

## **OTHER SAFETY NET SERVICES**

### **100 Homes Housing Campaign a Success**

Three years ago, as part of Arlington's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, the County and its community partners initiated a campaign to find housing for 100 chronic and vulnerable homeless people by 2014.



The effort kicked off with 150 volunteers and civic leaders out before dawn to survey and register homeless persons living on Arlington streets. Since then, a team of County staff and community partners has worked to track and house those individuals identified as at-risk.

In October, the coalition announced it had reached its goal. The program's impact was made clear when the County's 2014 point-in-time homeless count showed a 39 percent overall reduction in the number of homeless people in Arlington.

Of the 100 people housed, 93 are still in housing thanks to the work of case managers who help clients address issues ranging from managing finances to accessing mental health and substance abuse services. Many of them had lived on the streets for years and had significant barriers to accessing and maintaining housing.

Part of the national 100,000 Homes Campaign, Arlington earned membership in the 2.5 Percent Club, an exclusive group of localities that successfully housed 2.5 percent of their chronic and vulnerable homeless residents each month.

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## **Work Continues on New Homeless Services Center**

Construction is progressing on the County's new Homeless Services Center (HSC), which is on track for completion in spring 2015. In February, the Board approved a \$6.6 million contract to build out the Thomas Building at 2020 14<sup>th</sup> St. N. in the Courthouse area to house the facility.

When the Center opens, it will replace the Emergency Winter Shelter that is located just blocks away and will offer services that focus on moving homeless persons from the street into permanent housing, as well as providing a safe place to sleep.



*Construction continues on the County's new Homeless Services Center*

The facility also will offer meals, access to shower and laundry facilities, connect clients to mental health and substance abuse treatment and employment services. There will be 50 year-round shelter beds, 25 winter hypothermia prevention beds, and five medical respite beds. With its three distinct service areas — shelter, day program, and medical respite — the HSC will be a critical component of the community's efforts to end homelessness. It will employ a best-practice model that uses integrated, comprehensive services to facilitate moving homeless persons into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The County has retained the services of Housing Innovations, a national consultant, to design the Center's programming and unify it with Arlington's other shelters and the Residential Program Center on Columbia Pike.

## **1,000 Arlingtonians Find Employment through Arlington Employment Center**



This year more than 1,000 Arlington residents found employment through the Arlington Employment Center. The first "One Stop" employment center in the state, the Arlington Employment Center has been in existence for 25 years, serving both job seekers and area employers.

Job seeker services include employment workshops, skill assessments, individualized counseling with a career coach, and use of a state-of-the-art resource center, electronic job board subscriptions and specialized hiring events offered at the Center.

For those who qualify, the Center offers free tuition for occupational skills training using federal Workforce Investment Act funds. Veterans have access to training opportunities designed specifically for them.

In addition to serving job seekers, the Arlington Employment Center helped more than 500 regional businesses find qualified candidates.

For employers, the Employment Center offers customized recruitments, pre-screened candidates, unlimited job postings and facilities for conducting recruitment and interviewing.

Clients benefit from the full-time presence of the agency's partners who provide a full menu of job seeker and employer focused services. These organizations include Northern Virginia Community College, Arlington Public Schools, the Virginia Employment Center, the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and the National Council on Aging.

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## **Employment Center's Focus on At-Risk Students Brings Results**

For 18 recent high school graduates, the future is now more secure due to their involvement in the Arlington Employment Center's Countdown to Graduation Program.

The students, who were referred to the Center by their schools' guidance counselors, had poor academic performance and, for some, seemingly insurmountable life challenges. Several of the students were living outside of their families, while others had been in youth detention. All had academic and life skills below their grade level, and not expected to graduate.

Thanks in part to the Countdown to Graduation program, all 18 students received their high school diplomas in June. Thirteen have gone on to post-secondary educational opportunities and the others are in the workforce holding jobs

with long-term career potential.

The program provides intensive one-on-one counseling sessions with

Arlington Employment Center youth staff, college prep workshops, life skills and household budgeting training, and job search guidance.

In recognition of the impact of the program on Arlington students, the school system gave special recognition to the program's youth specialist for her positive influence and work in improving the Arlington Public Schools' graduation rate.

### **Youth Living Independently Get an EDGE**

Living with mental illness is particularly challenging for youth aging out of foster care and/or living independently. The County's Effective, Directed and Goal-oriented, Employment Strategies (EDGE) program prepares young adults to live independently by providing them with opportunities to learn life skills through guided workshops and community



activities tailored to teach specific skills based on the goals, needs and recovery process of each participant.

By mid-November, 57 young adults were participating in EDGE , all of whom showed marked improvement since joining the program, particularly in the areas of social skills, health and wellness, employment, nutrition, and better understanding of their mental illness.

During 2014, the EDGE offered more than 244 skill-based workshops providing opportunities for young adults to learn and practice daily living skills and participate in monthly activities.

The program provides a safe and supportive environment that encourages young adults to become more self-sufficient as they learn the skills necessary to live on their own. The ultimate goal of the program is to teach life skills to young adults and help them to learn how to manage their mental health symptoms as they transition into independent living for a successful future.

## **Fee Reductions Make Leisure Accessible to Everyone**

Arlington County offers a wide variety of ongoing recreation classes and summer camps for participants of all abilities, and ages three through 21. For summer camps alone in 2014, the County offered residents 455 options, and recreation classes attracted 11,400 participants during the year.

Recognizing the attractiveness of these programs, the County makes every effort to ensure that they are affordable to residents of all income levels. This year, County residents with financial need received more than \$172,000 in assistance to send their children to camp, and approximately 2,306 individuals qualified for fee reductions (only 634 qualified in 2010).

After school program participants, at 61 percent, make up the greatest percentage of users who qualified for a fee reduction.



## ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

*World-class community, tourism attraction and smart-growth leader—these are all phrases used to describe what is special about Arlington. Yet, Arlington did not become the community it is today by accident; instead, its residents, community leaders, and government officials collectively have worked to ensure the County's sustainability over time. Throughout the years, they endeavored to provide an economic environment that is favorable to attracting and retaining businesses and adopted a comprehensive planning effort to balance the pressures of new development and the desire to preserve Arlington's neighborhoods character. Today, the County employs a three-point approach to economic sustainability—Economic Development, Planning & Development, and Transportation.*

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### TandemNSI Formed to Spur National Security Innovation in Arlington

In January, the County Board accepted a state grant to fund an innovative public-private initiative that will connect fast-growth technology product companies with national security agencies headquartered in Arlington—called the Tandem National Security Initiative or TandemNSI. The initiative is part of the County's plan to accelerate its role in promoting an innovation economy.



Since the partnership's launch, it has successfully generated 650 new business leads for the County as it regularly brings together industry leaders, executives, company founders, representatives from government research agencies, and start-ups in the national security arena from throughout the greater metropolitan region.

TandemNSI works to highlight the appeal of Arlington and the rest of Virginia as locations to grow, attract and retain successful national security-related businesses. By connecting technology companies with security agencies headquartered in Arlington, it aims to foster commercialization of federally funded technology and open a market for entrepreneurs to expand in and relocate to the county.

#### ConnectArlington Evolving, Expanding

ConnectArlington's original purpose was to link County facilities and Arlington Public Schools (APS) using high-speed broadband technology through underground or dark dedicated fiber. Today, ConnectArlington is no longer restricted to County and school facilities, but soon will be available to other local exchange carriers. Officials now refer to the program as either ConnectArlington 1.0 (the original project) or ConnectArlington 2.0, its expansion.

To date, 50 County and APS sites, 232 traffic lights and 13 public safety ports in the initial stage of ConnectArlington 1.0 are network-ready. The project will next connect another 40 facilities upon the completion of the final phase of the Intelligent Traffic System project. Completion of ConnectArlington 1.0 will result in the County having its own fiber-optic network, ensuring that the government, schools and the community will benefit from cost-effective service delivery not tied to commercial rates.

In April, the County announced expansion of the program to local businesses (ConnectArlington 2.0). County staff is now finalizing the legal agreement required to license the fiber. Once it is complete, businesses will have an opportunity to use the network for secure collaboration with defense and research agencies, including the Pentagon.



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## Arlington Stakes its Position as the State's Innovation Hub

This year the County took action to strengthen Arlington's position as a hub of "innovation economy." In April, the County Board approved broadening the Technology Zone incentive program for new technology companies starting and expanding in Arlington's defined Technology



Zones. In November, the Board approved advertising public hearings on a proposal to modify the Technology Zone qualifications, and extend program eligibility.

The April action updated the County's Technology Zones first adopted into the County Code in 2001. The action also simplified the definitions of "qualified technology business," eliminated the 100-employee threshold in the downtown technology zones for new businesses, offered incentives to expanding businesses and standardized tiers of eligibility standards and Business, Professional and Occupational License rates in all Technology Zones. Those changes successfully improved Arlington's ability to recruit businesses and strengthened its identity as a destination for technology companies.

The modifications proposed for advertising in November are two minor adjustments to the Code. The first is to expand the county's technology zone boundaries to include all of Arlington's commercial and industrial areas to capture the remaining 2 percent of existing office inventory that the original 2001 Technology Zone Code excluded. The second would allow employment growth occurring prior to April 12, 2014, to count toward qualification as an expansion technology business. This would permit companies to qualify if they added the jobs within the 12 months prior to qualification, including jobs added before April 12, 2014.

The amendments, adopted and proposed, indicate the importance of the technology industry in Arlington's economy.

## Business Ombudsman – Opening the Door for Businesses

In March, the County Manager announced the appointment of a Business Ombudsman as part of the County's economic sustainability initiative and an outgrowth of her 2013 business listening tour.

Specifically, the Ombudsman coordinates the County's effort to strengthen the partnerships between government, businesses and entrepreneurs, and leads the process improvement effort to ensure quality assurance.

This work includes a number of "consumer-facing" County agencies with focus on improving customer service, resolving issues and identifying and improving appropriate administrative processes.



During 2014, the Business Ombudsman and other County staff assisted more than 50 businesses operating in Arlington to navigate through various administrative processes and manage a range of other issues, many of which were resolved, while others are progressing towards resolution.

The effort also led to process improvements such as new in-person payment options available at the permit counters rather than having individuals travel to the Treasurer's Office on another floor to pay. Other actions included making progress on the implementation of email push notifications to applicants regarding the status of their permit requests, and reviewing the business related information on the County's website for further consolidation. The intention is to create a One-Stop online shop for businesses.

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## County Actively Works to Attract, Retain Businesses

Since January, the County has actively recruited new companies that occupy a total of 661,786 square feet (SF) of office space and offer 1,946 jobs.

The County also retained companies occupying 418,452 square feet of space and 1,723 jobs, amounting to 1,083,907 SF and 3,669 jobs.

The County also strives to retain jobs and is currently working with businesses that represent just over 6 million square feet of prospects and 16,000 jobs, of which existing companies account for 2.1 million square feet and almost 10,000 jobs. This includes the retention of the Transportation Security Administration and the State Department.

There are numerous, confidential, brand name, corporate clients – controlling two million square feet of office space – that County staff is working to retain in Arlington that would be significant wins if they remain. Staff also is reaching out to new businesses to provide resource and contact information; and beginning in January 2015, staff will invite selected companies to quarterly receptions to welcome them into the County, provide connections to key community leaders and resource information.

Additionally, the BizLaunch program hosted nearly 6,000 participants for 73 workshops from July 2013 to June 2014. Another 714 participants received one-on-one business counseling services from BizLaunch and SCORE (Service Core of Retired Executives) mentors.



*Crystal City is home for many Arlington businesses*

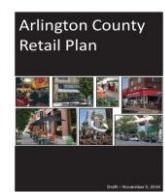
## Update to the County's Retail Plan in the Works

In November, the County Board approved advertising public hearings on an update of the County's Retail Plan. The proposed plan provides a vision for Arlington's retail and service environment, and puts forth recommendations for uses within the ground floors of buildings and principles and policies for achieving successful retail. It contains an overview of retail and evolving national trends, a snapshot of retail in Arlington today, and articulates a specific vision for retail in Arlington:

*"Arlington will be a place where retail is convenient, appealing, activating, and sustainable; that provides interest and authenticity, entertainment and experiences, and goods and services to residents, employees, and visitors; and where local, independent, regional, and national businesses thrive."*

Emerging from this draft vision are six principles:

1. Retail evolves and changes. Retail reflects the trends,
2. Retail is a mix of local, independent, regional and national retailers,
3. Retail needs customers,
4. Retail needs to look like retail,
5. Retail thrives in a well-designed and well-managed public realm,
6. Retail likes to cluster.



County staff developed the draft plan to have a 10-year horizon to accommodate the changing dynamics of retail and other ground floor uses. The Board will consider the plan for adoption in the first quarter of 2015 following a work session with the Economic Development Commission.

## Arlington Tops in Tourism for the Fifth Consecutive Year

The United States Travel Association for the fifth consecutive year in September identified Arlington as the top Virginia county for visitor spending from travelers from within the United States taking trips 50 miles or more away from

home.

In 2013, visitors spent more than \$2.8 billion in Arlington, the highest amount ever. Tourism officials report that the money supports more than 24,000 jobs and credits it with generating more

than \$78 million in local taxes and \$94 million in state taxes during the year.

Although Arlington visitor spending in 2013 was higher than ever, the rate of year-over-year growth declined, continuing a trend that began in 2010. The rate dropped from 7.6 percent for calendar years 2010-2011, to 3.9 percent for 2011-2012, to just 1.9 percent for years 2012-2013.

To attract visitors, the County conducted several vacation sweepstakes on Facebook, increasing its fan base to nearly 32,000 and raising sports fans' awareness of Arlington as the ideal place to stay when their teams play one of Washington's professional sports teams (Washington Nationals, Capitals, Mystics, etc.).

In addition, as part of the Northern Virginia Visitors Consortium, Arlington launched a three-year integrated marketing initiative with Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties, City of Alexandria and Virginia Tourism Corporation to promote "Virginia's Cultural Region" to prospective visitors in Ontario and Quebec. The County also launched a targeted digital-engagement strategy to leverage online conversations to expand awareness of Arlington.



*The Air Force Memorial is a popular tourists' attraction*

## The Artisphere Enjoys Increased Patronage

The Artisphere is one of the amenities that make Arlington attractive to residents, businesses and visitors. In 2014, the Artisphere presented nearly 200 programmed events in a variety of disciplines, including visual arts, theater, dance, music, multimedia, and more, generating positive feedback and critical acclaim. It welcomed more than 70,000 visitors in fiscal year 2014, which marks an 11 percent increase in attendance from the previous year.

Half of Artisphere's patrons came from Virginia and nearly half of the Virginia-based audience was from Arlington. Residents from Maryland and Washington, D.C. combined made up approximately 44 percent of Artisphere's patron base. The remaining 9 percent of patrons came from 47 other states across the United States as well as an international audience from 15 different countries.

The Artisphere is a desired venue and sought-after partner by organizations in the region. Recent presenting and promotional partnerships include the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; a multi-organization partnership involving the Spain USA Foundation, the Spanish Embassy and SPAIN arts + culture; the Inter-American Development Bank, the Mexican Cultural Institute and the African Diaspora for Change to name just a few. In addition, Artisphere's focus on the intersection of arts and technology continues to attract technology based businesses and organizations for partnerships and events.



*Artisphere patrons at the "Think with Your Hands" opening reception*

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## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT – APPROVED NEW DEVELOPMENTS

### Marymount's "Blue Goose" Site to Be Redeveloped

In January, the County Board approved Marymount University's (MU) plan to replace the eight-story "Blue Goose" facility with two new buildings that will add apartments, ground floor retail and a public plaza to the two-acre site. The development will allow the university to maintain and expand its presence in Ballston and transform the surrounding area.



*An artist rendering of the approved development replacing the "Blue Goose" building*

Plans call for the demolition of the 1963 building to replace it with an office building and a residential building, both to be built to achieve a Gold level rating under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) program. The buildings will sit atop three levels of underground parking. A public plaza will anchor the corner of the site.

Marymount initially intends to use the first six floors of the office building, and eventually the entire building. The school and its developer partner will contribute funds to the construction of the Ballston Metrorail Station western entrance, as well as improvements to the Ballston Pond and the Custis Trail to the west of the site.

The "Blue Goose" building features geometrically arranged polychromatic blue metal panels that earned it its nickname; several of these elements will be incorporated into the new office building and public plaza.

### Board Approves Springs Apartment Building in Buckingham

The second project approved by the County Board in January was the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing's new five-story apartment building – "The Springs" – in Buckingham at 4318 N. Carlin Springs Road.

The new building will replace a 27-unit garden apartment structure with a 104-unit building that will provide housing affordable for low-and-moderate income families within walking distance of a Metrorail station for 60 years.

It will feature office space, underground parking, and 98 committed affordable units, a net increase of 71 affordable homes for the County.

Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing has pledged to incorporate sustainable design elements and innovative technologies into the project to earn the EarthCraft Certification (green building certification) and to provide contributions to the County's public art and utility underground funds and pay for streetscape improvements, and more.

Current residents of the existing building are eligible for relocation assistance. If qualified, they will receive rental assistance to make up the gap between the rent at another apartment until they move back to the new building. They have the option of an additional 12 months of such assistance if needed. In addition to approving the site plan, the Board also authorized amending the General Land Use Plan, rezoning the site, and a \$7.82 million Affordable Housing Investment Fund loan to help finance the development.



*An artist rendering of the Springs Apartment building*

## New Hotel Coming to Courthouse Area

A new hotel is coming to the Courthouse area thanks to a March vote by the County Board. Located at 2401 and 2407 Wilson Blvd., the building will be sited about 500 feet from the Courthouse Metrorail station and provide a transition between the high density development along Wilson Boulevard and homes in the Lyon Village neighborhood.

The eight-story hotel, replacing the existing one-story 1950s strip shopping center and surface parking lot, will offer 161 rooms, 80 underground parking spaces, a bar/cafe associated with the hotel, and 1,200 square feet of separately leased ground floor restaurant space. The Board also approved building four new single-family homes on the adjoining residential property at North 16<sup>th</sup> Street replacing the homes currently occupying the space, and voted to amend the General Land Use Plan and rezone the site.

Some of the community benefits provided by the project include streetscape improvements, removal of curb cuts on 16<sup>th</sup> Street North and Wilson Boulevard, completion of a cul-de-sac and turnaround on North Adams Street, contributions to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund, and public art. The developer also will contribute nearly \$1.5 million for a new Courthouse Metro elevator and agreed that the building will be LEED Gold and Energy Star certified and subject to post-construction Energy Star monitoring and reportage.

The site plan follows guidelines stated in the 1993 Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum, such as concentrating higher density projects near the Metro station.



An artist rendering of a new Courthouse hotel

## Mixed-Use Development near Rosslyn Metro Station Replacing a Bit of History

A site plan for two mixed-use, energy-efficient buildings, on the block of 1401 Wilson Boulevard and 1400 Key Boulevard, won approval by the County Board in April. The project will replace two 1960s office buildings and a parking garage.



**Two new energy efficient buildings near the Rosslyn Metro Station approved in April**

It is the first approved development guided by the Rosslyn Plan Framework adopted in April. The project includes a 24-story office building that will combine 513,004 square feet of office space with 11,131 of ground floor retail space and an adjoining

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### **Vacant 1960s-Era Office Building to House “WeWork” Residential Building**

The County Board in July approved Arlington’s first WeWork residential building in Crystal City. Specifically, the Board endorsed a plan by Vornado to convert a vacant 1965 office building in Crystal City to an innovative apartment building that will offer shared amenities and a floor-by-floor “neighborhood” culture.

The building, currently known as Crystal Plaza 6, is part of the Crystal Plaza development whose last federal tenant moved out earlier in the year. Vornado developed the project in partnership with WeWork, a national company with co-working offices in major metropolitan areas across the country. The company currently has three offices in the Washington, D.C. area that provide co-working office space, benefits and support.

The Crystal City project is WeWork’s first residential building. The completed building will offer 252 units, most 360 square feet or less, and several shared “two-story” neighborhoods with common areas connected by staircases. It also will feature streetscaping, sidewalk improvements, outdoor play areas and indoor play and lounge zones.

WeWork has a 20-year lease on the building that the Crystal City Sector Plan has targeted for redevelopment by 2050 with realignment of South Clark/Bell Street. Vornado plans to gut the structure but leave the exterior intact, save for an “experiential” exterior color application that changes as one moves around the building.



*Crystal Plaza 6*

### **New Live-Work Building near Clarendon Metro Station Green Lighted**

In addition to approving the conversion of the Crystal 6 building in July, the County Board also gave the green light to a use permit proposal to replace two office buildings near the Clarendon Metro Station with a five-story, mixed-use building offering apartments, live-work units, ground floor retail, and office space.



*The 10th Street Flats will provide Live-Work units near the Clarendon Metro station*

The development, located at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and North Highland streets, will be a 147,948 square foot building with 3,600 square feet of retail on the street level, and 135 apartments on the four upper floors along with 4,704 square feet of office space and two levels of underground parking.

The property owner will offer six of the apartments for rent by households earning at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income. By including affordable units and proposing to achieve LEED Gold status, the developer was able to gain bonus height and floors, consistent with the Clarendon Sector Plan.

The building also will contain office space for the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless, whose existing one-story building is to be demolished as part of the project.

Located within the Lyon Park Civic Association, the proposed development’s use permit process saw participation by representatives from Lyon Park, Ashton Heights, Clarendon-Courthouse and Lyon Village civic associations.

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## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT-LONG RANGE

### PLANNING STUDIES UNDERWAY

#### Realize Rosslyn – Establishing a Vision for the Future of Rosslyn

In late 2012, the County initiated “Realize Rosslyn,” a new planning process to fine-tune Rosslyn’s current long-range plan. The initiative strives to ensure that voices in Rosslyn and across Arlington join the conversation on refining the community vision for Rosslyn and creating a planning framework that ensures a vibrant mix of housing, retail, office and public space in the area.

This April, the County Board adopted the Rosslyn Plan Framework that lays out the vision and recommendations for how the community would like to see the area evolve. The Framework includes six vision principles that focus on upgrades to parks and open spaces, transportation, improved urban design, and developing a new building heights policy.

Its major recommendations include continuing to advance Rosslyn’s transformation into a high-density, mixed-use district, consistent with the General Land Use Plan; constructing more housing in central Rosslyn; encouraging more varied building facades and adding distinction to the Rosslyn skyline. Other suggestions include enhancing connectivity among public open spaces and making Rosslyn a regional premier transit hub with transformed pedestrian and bicycle networks. The Framework’s adoption is a key milestone in the Realize Rosslyn community planning process and updating the Rosslyn Sector Plan.

In addition, following the adoption of the Framework, the Rosslyn Process Panel formed

three subcommittees to review draft proposals and policies prior to their inclusion in the complete plan document. Staff expects the final adoption of the Rosslyn Sector Plan Update in spring 2015.



Rosslyn and Key Bridge

The Realize Rosslyn efforts have included several community workshops and events that each attracted more than 100 participants engaging in discussions on preliminary ideas and alternatives arising through the process. Some of the topics presented at these workshops included preferred strategies for transportation and public places.

The process will lead to an update of the Rosslyn Sector Plan that will build on the successes of the 1992 Rosslyn Station Area Plan Addendum, and will focus on an updated vision and strategies for creating a better urban design framework.

The overarching goals of these strategies will focus on making Rosslyn a more attractive, enjoyable place for people to live, work, and play.

Additionally, staff continues to work with consultants on a pre-feasibility study of potential air rights development over Interstate 66 in Rosslyn. The study’s goal is to address a series of key questions that will help shape a recommendation on the appropriate level of detail that the Realize Rosslyn process should address in planning for potential air rights development.



## **Envision Courthouse – A Public-Private Partnership to Re-Imagine the Civic Center**

In March, the County launched “Envision Courthouse Square,” a 10-month community planning process and effort to re-imagine the County’s civic center. The goal of the initiative is to update the vision for the area detailed in the 1993 Courthouse Sector Plan Addendum, which identified a state-of-the-art government center and signature public space as critical to its development. The update will create a visionary plan, strategies, policies, development standards and implementation steps.

Envision Courthouse features staff working with the Courthouse Square Planning and Urban Design Study Working Group, made up of residents, representatives from civic and advisory groups and members of the business community. Its primary responsibility is to advise staff drafting the plan and advocate the perspectives of their constituencies.

The County is using an ongoing online engagement effort to complement and parallel in-person working group meetings and community workshops. This includes a project website and email initiative, and surveys to gather additional community input from approximately 1,000 respondents. A work session is set for early December to gather additional community input on the study.

Staff expects to present the final update for County Board consideration by the spring of 2015. If adopted, the update will create a visionary plan for the area.



*The Envision Courthouse initiative relies heavily on community engagement*

## **Progress Continues on the Western Rosslyn Area Planning Study (WRAPS)**



The boundaries of the Western Rosslyn study area are 18th Street North, Wilson Boulevard, Quinn Street North, and Key Boulevard. Currently, the area contains the Wilson School, Fire Station #10, a park, an office building and a residential development. It is included within the boundaries of the 1992 Rosslyn Station Area Addendum.

In September 2013, the County Board re-started the planning process for the area with adoption of the revised charge for the Western-Rosslyn Area Planning Study (WRAPS) Working Group and appointed the group members to work with County staff to develop a draft Area Plan for western Rosslyn.

Eight months later, in May 2014, the County Board revised the Working Group's charge and membership, which initiated the community planning process to achieve several County goals for the site including affordable housing, a new secondary school, open space, and a new fire station. The public process kicked-off in June with a walking tour and overview of the study's goals and objectives.

The focus since June has been on developing the preliminary and final Concept Plan. The process is being coordinated with the Realize Rosslyn effort to ensure the two studies are congruent.

The adopted plan will guide future public and private development within the study area, and outline the incorporation of the County's goals into the overall development.

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## CODE CHANGES TO REFLECT CURRENT PRACTICES, ARLINGTON TODAY

### Noise Ordinance Updated to Comply with State Code

The Noise Control Ordinance is the standard the County employs for controlling environmental noise. Its application is countywide, excluding state and federally regulated properties, reservations, and thoroughfares. In May, the County Board approved updates to the ordinance to bring it into compliance with state law and to address community concerns.

The County adopted the previous noise control ordinance in 1975; the updated code reflects Arlington as it is today, including a 31 percent growth in Arlington's population since the 1970s.

The most important change was the removal of the reference to the "reasonable person standard," which was identified as unconstitutionally subjective language by the Virginia Supreme Court in its 2009 decision *Tanner v. City of Virginia Beach*.

Other updates include new measurement standards to determine above-grade noise violations, including motor vehicle noise and sound-reading collections at high-rise locations and multi-unit buildings; and clarity on allowed noise exemptions during emergencies, including use of generators, repairs and public utility work.

The changes introduced civil penalties, increased criminal penalties and a civil appeal process and enhanced prohibited acts to address issues such as loud music, nighttime gatherings in residential districts, idling commercial vehicles, use of lawn and garden maintenance equipment, and animal noises. It goes further to include new definitions for legal holidays and mixed-use districts.



*Building Arlington offers details on  
the Noise, Zoning code updates*

The update also provided a number of revised standards making them more easily defined and enforceable, such as stronger construction requirements for developers and owners providing sound mitigation. Others balance

"community annoyances" with the County's plans for lively, high density, mixed-use neighborhoods; and exemptions to align the ordinance with enforcement expectations and standard compliance.

### Multi-Year Zoning Ordinance Update Nears Final Leg

The multiphase update of the Zoning Ordinance moved into the final stages in 2014 as the County Board adopted the third phase (Phase IIB), and authorized advertisement of the final phase of the four-year effort that began in 2010.

In June, the Board adopted a series of amendments that codified administrative practices and previous Zoning Administrator determinations related to bulk, placement and coverage; updated nonconforming use provisions for consistency with state code; and a range of other clarifying updates.

In January 2015, staff plans to request authorization from the County Board to advertise amendments for the final phase of the update for public hearings later in 2015. These amendments, if adopted, will introduce a use classification system; make related updates to use tables and use standards; and update definitions and terms. Staff published a preliminary draft of the modifications for public review in September 2014, followed by two months of public comment and outreach.

The County initiated the overall update to improve customer service and to make the ordinance easier to understand and administer. Prior phases of the effort included revised sign regulations adopted in July 2012 (Phase I) and a complete reformatted Zoning Ordinance in May 2013 (Phase IIA).

## TRANSPORTATION

### Arlington-Fairfax Streetcar Program Cancelled

Arlington's long-held plans for a streetcar system along the Columbia Pike and Crystal City/Potomac Yard corridors ended in November when the County Board voted to cancel the program to "heal divisions that were distracting the community from a range of pressing issues."

Specifically, the Board asked the County Manager to terminate all County streetcar projects, withdraw or modify applications for state and federal grants and terminate state agreements to fund the project. Board members also directed the manager to assess the implications on the County's General Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance; its plans to build and preserve affordable housing in the Columbia Pike corridor; the Master Transportation Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan. The Board also directed the Manager to develop alternate transportation strategies to improve transit options and capacity for the Columbia Pike and Crystal City/Potomac Yard corridors without a streetcar; and to report to the Board on the financial impacts of discontinuing the program.

In announcing the Board's decision, Chairman Jay Fisette stated "debating the streetcar issue further – with continued discord and dueling facts – will not serve our community and will distract us from addressing the other pressing issues before us "

The Arlington-Fairfax 7.4-mile streetcar system won approval in 2006 and since then, Arlington and Fairfax County worked diligently to secure funding, issue contracts, and design infrastructure improvements, all in an effort to start the service in 2020.

The two counties initiated the streetcar program as a catalyst for transforming Columbia Pike by increasing the corridor's

transit capacity, encouraging high-quality mixed-use development and supporting the vision for neighborhoods that are more walkable and transit-accessible. Other benefits included sustaining the economic vitality of the area and supporting additional housing, including affordable housing, as detailed in the Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan.

### Construction Begins on the Crystal City-Potomac Yard Transitway

In July, the County celebrated the groundbreaking for Arlington's section of the Crystal City-Potomac Yard Transitway at the site of where part of the new dedicated transit lane and a new station will be located, the corner of 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Crystal Drive.

The County Board approved the project's \$10.5 million construction contract in February, which covers roadwork and new stations. The total budget for Arlington's Transitway section is \$21.3 million, which includes planning, design, construction, management, contingencies and an extension to Pentagon City. Financing for the project will come from state and federal transportation funding and a dedicated transportation tax on Arlington's commercial properties.

The project will include completion of traffic improvements along Crystal Drive and Clark-Bell Streets where transit buses will operate in the curb lanes dedicated to transit use during peak periods. It also features construction of transit stations with raised platforms at four locations in the area.

The project supports both current and future development in the area and is another joint project with the City of Alexandria.



Route and station map for the Crystal City-Potomac Yard Transitway

## Columbia Pike Transit Stations Designed to Accommodate Increased Transit Demands

Columbia Pike is one of the region's busiest transit corridors. To serve the projected increase in future public transit users, the County is building a network of 23 high capacity transit stations. The County installed the prototype station at the intersection of Columbia Pike and South Walter Reed Drive.



*The Walter Reed transit station*

The station did not meet the expectations of residents or County officials and after an extensive review of how it performed in the field, the County Manager announced in May a new design for future stations, along with plans to reduce cost and improve functionality.

The new modular design will use standardized components that lessen complexity, lower construction costs and offer better control over long-term maintenance. It also will allow creation of smaller or larger stations based on conditions and ridership demands at individual sites. This will reduce the total project cost by 40 percent, from \$20.9 million to \$12.4 million.

Some of the stations' key improvements over the prototype include larger canopy and side windscreens to enhance coverage area and weather protection, reduced footprint to improve pedestrian circulation and ADA accessibility, and more comfortable, covered and flexible seating.

The County will oversee the construction, and all consultants and contractors will work directly for the County. In comparison, during the first iteration Arlington designed the prototype while

the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority managed its construction.

Phased construction of the remaining stops will begin in late 2015 or early 2016 in areas of the Pike already improved as part of the Columbia Pike Multimodal Utility Under-grounding and Streetscape Project.

## ART Bus Service Expanded

Arlington Transit, or ART, supplements Metrobus service in Arlington with cross-county routes as well as neighborhood connections to Metrorail. During 2014, ART bus service continued to grow with the introduction of new routes.

In March, Arlington Transit launched ART 43, which provides a limited stop, express service connecting downtown Crystal City and the Crystal City Metrorail and Virginia Rail Express (VRE) stations to Rosslyn and Courthouse during the morning and evening rush periods. Initiated to fill the gap created by the reduction in Blue line Metrorail service to Rosslyn, ART 43 is already carrying more than 300 riders per day.

In October, ART began ART 92 that provides a new, convenient way to travel through and around the Crystal City area on weekdays. Stops include the Crystal City Metro and VRE stations, Crystal Gateway hotel, the soccer fields at Long Bridge Park and the Pentagon Metro station. The route also serves as a shuttle for those working at the Boeing building to get to the Metro or VRE stations.

To handle the increase in routes and ridership, ART accepted and deployed into service eight new full-size, 40-foot heavy-duty buses.



*ART offers cross county bus service*

## **Bus Stops Improved, Upgraded**

The County conducted an inventory of Arlington's bus stops and shelters in 2013. The study led to a comprehensive analysis of the stops' accessibility and showed that nearly 750 bus stops (including shelters) were in need of various accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defined improvements ranging from minor quick repairs to installation



of basic concrete ADA-compliant landing pads.

In 2014, the County completed accessibility improvements at 23 bus stops, improved the boarding area at five additional stops, added six new shelters and replaced two older units. Other work included installation of two freestanding benches and the addition of four new bus stops for the ART 43 route and nine new stops for the ART 92 route.

## **Bicycle Access, Pedestrian Safety Enhanced**

As part of its bicycle access and pedestrian safety program, in 2014 the County introduced two new initiatives to protect cyclists and to evaluate bike and pedestrian transportation—protected bike lanes and a bike traffic counting device known as the “Bikeometer.”

Arlington's first fully protected bike lane, also known as a “cycle track,” is located on 18th Street South in the Pentagon City area. The facility allows cyclists to ride along 18th Street in an area protected from motorized traffic. The County also repaved and remarked a 1,500-foot



*Protected bike lanes allow riders to travel safely on Arlington streets*

long block of South Hayes Street in Pentagon City with protected bike lanes, and is developing a pilot project to install protected bike lanes on South Eads Street between 15th Street South and 23rd Street South in conjunction with the repaving project that started this past fall.

In April, the County unveiled the region's first Bikeometer, or Eco-Totem, on the Martha Custis Trail in Rosslyn. The tool is a high-tech, totem display that counts passing bicyclists in real time and displays cumulative daily, monthly and year-to-date counts.

While the County already had an existing network of bicycle/pedestrian counters, the Bikeometer is the first that displays real-time data. The County will use the captured data to inform future on-and off-road planning for safe bicycling in Arlington.



*Protecting cyclists is a critical safety focus in Arlington*

## FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

*Arlington officials continued to take steps to ensure the County's fiscal sustainability during 2014. These measures include refinancing debt, generating budget savings, revising financial and debt management policies, and adopting an operating budget that focused on preserving core services and aiding County residents most in need. Combined, these actions allowed Arlington once again to receive the coveted Triple-A bond rating, confirming the County's status as one of the most financially stable municipalities in the country, as just 39 counties in the United States are so highly rated.*

### **Arlington's Triple-AAAA Bond Ratings Reaffirmed for 14th Consecutive Year**

For the 14th consecutive year, bond-rating agencies Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's have reaffirmed Arlington County's debt ratings of Aaa/AAA/AAA – the highest ratings. Arlington is one of only 39 counties (out of more than 3,000) in the United States to hold this distinction.

Moody's noted that the County's "continued careful financial management and commitment to maintaining sound financial flexibility are expected to maintain Arlington's strong fiscal operations."

Fitch noted that the County's "*debt levels are moderate and expected to remain so given prudent planning and adherence to conservative debt policies.*"

Standard and Poor's noted the County's "*very strong debt and contingent liability, driven by low carrying charges, low net debt and rapid amortization.*"

Having Aaa/AAA/AAA ratings ensures that the County can borrow at the lowest possible interest rates for capital investments.

This is critical as Arlington, like other local governments throughout the country, is juggling the need to provide high quality services while not over burdening taxpayers.



*Capital Bikeshare is a part of the County's BikeArlington program, which will benefit from bond funding*

### **Low Interest Rates Provide Substantial Savings**

In May, the County issued \$65 million of General Obligation Public Improvement Bonds, and \$41 million of General Obligation Refunding Bonds.

The County received seven bids on bonds issued for new projects (new money bonds) with \$65 million of the bonds sold to Citigroup Global Markets Inc. for an average interest rate of 2.8 percent.

Proceeds of the sale will finance County

projects including Arlington's capital contributions for Metro, Neighborhood Conservation, WalkArlington, BikeArlington, ConnectArlington, paving and utilities projects, and Arlington Public Schools facilities.

The County issued the remaining \$41 million of bonds to refund older, high interest rate bonds. Out of eight bidders, PNC Capital Markets submitted the winning bid of 2.27 percent. Total savings from the refunding is approximately \$2 million on a present value basis, which the County will allocate to both County and schools projects and the Utilities Funds.

The extremely low interest rate received on the bonds is a result of the County's Triple-AAA bond ratings, a reflection of the County's conservative budget management and strong fiscal operations.

## Arlington Real Estate Assessments Increased

From January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2014, Arlington's real property tax base increased by 5.8 percent, largely driven by strength in the residential market and new construction in commercial properties.



*Arlington's real estate values increased by 5.8 percent from 2013-2014*

The overall strength of Arlington's property values is due to its mix of commercial and residential properties, 49.5 and 50.5 percent, respectively.

The commercial tax base, which includes office space, apartments, general commercial and hotel buildings, increased by 5.4 percent, primarily fueled by new construction and growth in apartment values. The value of residential properties, single-family detached homes and condominiums, also increased with the average assessment up from \$524,700 in 2013 to \$552,700 in 2014. Eighty-nine percent of residential property owners saw an increase in their assessments, while 7 percent saw no change and 4 percent decreased. Assessment variations reflect the diversity in housing stock.



*Commercial properties such as Market Common also increased in value*

## Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Balances Community Needs

The County Board approved the Fiscal Year 2015 Operating Budget in April. The spending plan reflects a focus on Arlington Public Schools, social safety net programs, ongoing service operations, County employees and Arlington County taxpayers in a constrained fiscal environment.

In total, the County's budget increased 5.1 percent, even with a one-cent reduction in the real estate tax rate for calendar year 2014. It maintains high quality services and adds significant funding for Schools. School funding, totaling \$440.6 million, increased by 6.0 percent from the previous year. In comparison, many County programs and services saw minimal growth.



*The County's budget provides for continuing high quality services without overburdening taxpayers*

The budget allowed for the expansion of two program areas important to the community and the future economic growth of Arlington – the year-round Homeless Services Center and the County's commitment to affordable housing initiatives (with over 5 percent of the budget funding various housing programs).

In addition, Arlington continues to make investments in its future economic stability by funding tourism marketing and overtime pay for additional police to manage pub-crawl enforcement.

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## Voters Approve Bond Referenda

Arlington voters on November 4 approved four bond referenda, totaling \$219 million, to fund projects grouped in the general areas of:

- Metro and Transportation: \$60.24 million
- Local Parks and Recreation: \$13.07 million
- Community Infrastructure: \$39.9 million
- Arlington Public Schools: \$105.78 million

Funds from the Metro Transportation bond will pay for the County's share of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WAMATA) /Metro capital improvement program to enhance regional mobility and accessibility and relieve traffic congestion. It will also fund street paving and Neighborhood Complete Street programs.



*Voters approved bonds to fund new parks*

The Parks & Recreation bond will cover the costs for land acquisition for parks and open space, maintenance, and capital improvements. Community Infrastructure allocations will cover the costs of Neighborhood Conservation projects including street improvements, pedestrian enhancements, landscaping, and beautification.

The Schools Bond will fund the design and construction of APS facilities, including building new schools or renovating existing schools, and other capital projects.

## County Recognized for Financial Reporting

The County received an unqualified audit opinion for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for Fiscal Year 2014 that ended June 30, 2014. Receiving "the best possible"

opinion is critical to maintaining Arlington's Triple-A bond ratings.

The CAFR provides a detailed report of the County's financial condition at the end of each fiscal year. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) also recognized the report with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The County also received GFOA's Distinguished Budget Presentation recognition for the adopted Fiscal Year 2014 budget.

## Arlington Enhances Internal Audit Function

Arlington County officials are dedicated to ensuring the prudent use of the County's financial resources. As part of this effort, the County has been actively working to enhance its internal audit function. In addition to the ongoing recruitment for senior internal audit staff, the County has selected an external audit firm to supplement staff resources. Internal auditing brings a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management and controls.

## New Pay for Parking Option Introduced

The County introduced a new parking payment option in July—Pay-by-Cell—in response to constituent demand for additional parking payment options. Pay-by-Cell is a smartphone app-based service that allows drivers to pay for metered parking directly from their smartphone, making their parking experience simple, easy and convenient. It works in tandem with existing single- and multi-space systems and the self-metering iPark device.

In September, Pay-by-Cell had already accounted for approximately 12 percent of the total parking revenue and user feedback has been positive, with more than 60,000 parking transactions made and fewer than two dozen comments/requests logged. Anticipated benefits to the County include less frequent coin collection, greater transparency in parking data that fuels parking policy, and less reliance on high-maintenance single parking meters.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

*Several organizations, including the American Planning Association and Virginia Association of Counties, singled out Arlington's environmental programs for excellence during the year. The awards validated the County's strategy for preserving and conserving natural resources, including the efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to lessen the impact of development on the environment. Adoption of a new, more stringent Stormwater Management Ordinance, an updated Stormwater Master Plan and steps taken to preserve Arlington's tree canopy in 2014 are highlights of this effort.*

### New Stormwater Management Ordinance Enhances Efforts to Reduce Pollution

In May, the County Board adopted a new Stormwater Management Ordinance to meet new state regulations and to complement the County's ongoing efforts to lessen stormwater contamination.

The new ordinance addresses water quality, flood protection and requires developers to treat more impervious area on a site and build more or larger stormwater facilities to collect and filter stormwater. It also details a new technique for calculating stormwater management requirements for a development project, and includes incentives for practices that reduce runoff volume and provide pollution filtration such as Bioretention.

The County will continue to regulate individual, single-family home projects that disturb at least 2,500 square feet of land, as allowed under state law and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. Only 1 percent of existing Arlington home addition projects is impacted.



*The installation of stormwater planters is one method to reduce stormwater contamination*

### Stormwater Master Plan Updated

The County Board reinforced efforts to support Arlington's environmental protection goals for local streams with the adoption of a Stormwater Master Plan update in September.



*Rain gardens are effective in managing stormwater runoff*

The updated plan will help the County achieve pollution reduction requirements under its stormwater permit and the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (or the maximum amount of a pollutant the waterway can receive from Arlington).

It combines and updates stormwater infrastructure information from earlier plans with environmental and water quality information from the Watershed Management Plan to create a comprehensive Stormwater Master Plan.

It also prioritizes projects designed to help reduce the risk of localized flooding. The County identified \$61.3 million in funding in the Fiscal Year 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Plan for projects to implement the plan.

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## Grant Secured to Improve Ballston Pond



*The Ballston Pond*

The Virginia Stormwater Local Assistance Fund in January awarded Arlington a \$500,000 grant to improve the Ballston Pond, a key project in the County's 2014 stormwater management program. The project will help to preserve the Chesapeake Bay and strengthen Arlington's compliance with the newly issued stormwater permit and adopted Stormwater Master Plan Update.

Longtime Arlington residents know the Pond as the Ballston Beaver Pond as beavers occupied it in the 1990s, despite its original purpose to act as a stormwater detention facility to collect and slow stormwater runoff from Interstate 66. The beavers constructed a dam near the outflow structure, raising the water level higher than originally designed, which created ponds and wetlands.

The pond is no longer functioning as originally intended, and its water quality benefits are limited due to water flowing straight through the pond instead of taking a circuitous route. In addition to invasive plants, trash is a continual issue.

The Ballston Pond filters runoff from more than 300 acres of urban and suburban land. The \$2.7 million improvement project, paid for mostly from stormwater funds, includes changing the flow pattern to keep water in the pond longer, allowing wetland plants to remove nutrients and other pollutants before it flows out.

## Water Distribution Master Plan Provides for a Safe, Reliable Water Supply

In September, the County Board adopted the updated Water Distribution Master Plan that provides policy guidance for maintenance and improvement of the County's water distribution system to meet anticipated growth and development through 2040.

The plan will ensure the supply of an adequate, reliable and safe water supply for the County in the future.

It identifies actions for meeting this goal – such as constructing new or rehabilitating old water mains, valves, pump stations and water storage facilities; and implementing technology enhancements such as water meter technology, and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) that monitors tank level, flows, and pressures at various points in the water system.

Other items identified in the plan support the water system's asset management program. They include operations and maintenance programs for water meters, valves, hydrants, system flushing, backflow prevention and water quality. Funding for these projects is included in the Fiscal Year 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Plan.



*The Water Distribution Plan identifies projects to maintain infrastructure that are part of the County's water delivery system*

## **Green Building Policy Updated**

The County strengthened its commitment to sustainable community and green building efforts with the County Board's approval in November of updates and revisions of Arlington's Green Building Policy and Green Building Bonus Density Program for site plan projects.

Both programs rely on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council as a means of evaluating proposed site plan projects and encouraging the construction of energy efficient and environmentally sustainable buildings. Two of the key provisions of the changes are:

- In exchange for a commitment to achieve LEED Version 4 Silver Certification or above, site plan projects may request floor area ratio bonus (bonus density). All commercial office projects earning added density must also agree to earn Energy Star building certification within four years of occupancy.
- In order to facilitate the construction of high performing "green" affordable housing units, the program proposes that affordable housing projects receiving tax credits from the Virginia Housing Development Authority be allowed to earn bonus density using the Earthcraft green building rating system in place of LEED for projects designed to achieve the Earthcraft version 4 Gold and Platinum certifications.

Originally adopted in 1999 and updated in 2003, 2009, and 2012, the Green Building Program has been an effective tool for reducing the environmental impacts of buildings on the community, and the incentive program has been popular with developers in Arlington.

County staff proposed the changes due to the success of the policy to date, green building market transformations in the construction industry, changes in the building code, and recent updates to the LEED green building rating system (from LEED 2009 to LEED version 4).

## **Preserving Arlington's Natural Resources**

In addition to master plans and environmental policies, the County also relies on residents to help preserve Arlington's natural resources. These efforts include removal of invasive plants, stream cleanups and creating new natural habitats.

During 2014, volunteers contributed 1,000 hours to removing invasive plants from 116 acres of ecologically significant parkland as part of a strategic 10-year plan, with 59 acres treated for the first time.

Volunteers celebrated National Public Lands Day in September by reclaiming natural areas by removing invasive plants at Benjamin Banneker Park that led to the discovery of new colonies of Dwarf Ginseng (*Panax trifolius*) and Wood Anemone (*Anemone quinquefolia*). This fall, Eagle Scouts completed a new, vernal amphibian-breeding pond at Long Branch Nature Center.

Arlington gardeners desiring to "plant native" attended the spring and fall Long Branch Nature Center annual native plant sale to choose from Dutchman's breeches, Virginia Bluebells, Spiderwort, Whitewood Aster, Wild Geranium plants, and more. Residents had the option of ordering online or could browse the selection at the center.



Finally, 50 volunteers in April met at five locations along Four Mile Run to take part in Arlington's 26<sup>th</sup> annual stream cleanup. The event, sponsored by the County in conjunction with the Alice Ferguson Foundation, was a success with 50 bags of trash collected and taken away.

## **Efforts to Sustain, Restore Arlington's Tree Canopy**

Arlington celebrated Arbor Day 2014 with a ceremony at Barcroft Elementary School where the County received its 18th consecutive "Tree City USA" award. In addition, in November, the group recognized the County with a Sterling Tree City Award, making Arlington one of only four Virginia communities to receive the honor. This year the County continued its effort to enhance and sustain Arlington's tree canopy.

### *Restoring the Tree Canopy*

The County planted 673 trees and removed 620 for a net gain on public land of 53 trees through the annual Tree Distribution Program that is coordinated with the Tree Stewards and the Tree Canopy Fund. Residents planted an additional 450 trees on private property, with all tree recipients receiving tree planting education and support as needed to ensure healthy trees in the coming years.



*Planting trees to increase Arlington's tree canopy*

Contributions from developers to Arlington's Tree Canopy Fund underwrite the County's Tree Canopy Fund Grant program, a partnership between the County and Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE). This year, individual residents, neighborhood groups and organizations received grants from the program to plant 205 large shade trees (valued at \$53,000) on private property. Volunteers from ACE, the Urban Forestry Commission and the Tree Steward joined County staff to review the applications and to select the grant recipients.

## *Notable Trees*



*Deodar Cedar at 2223 N. Quantico St.*

The County Board recognized 18 Notable Trees in April. This year's plaque winners went to an Ohio Buckeye at 4863 28th St. N., Loblolly Pine at 5331 32nd St. N., Eastern Red Cedar at 1718 S. Quincy St., Black Oak at 1718 S. Quincy St., Southern Red Oak at 1718 S. Quincy St., White Oaks at 400 N. Manchester St., 315 N. Garfield St. and 4508 8th St., and the Deodar Cedar at 2223 N. Quantico St. The Board awarded Notable Tree Certificates to two Tulip trees at 5249 26th St. N. and another at 2320 N. Tuckahoe St.

Two Red Maples at 5923 3rd St. N., a Willow Oak at 1700 S. Pollard St., the Pin Oak at 4919 33rd Road N., a Black Cherry at 3557 N. Abingdon St., and an Eastern Red Cedar at 4814 3rd St N. all received recognition as well.

The Arlington Beautification Committee created the Notable Tree Program in 1987 to identify and register Arlington's outstanding trees. To date the committee has recognized 283 trees.

### *Specimen Trees*

A Post Oak and a White Oak, (at 23 Fenwick St. and 400 N. Manchester St. respectively) are the newest additions to the County's Specimen Tree list, which protects them from future removal or injury.

These two trees warranted the designations for their large size. The White Oak has a circumference of 150 inches and stands 86 feet tall and has a crown spread over 101 feet. The Post Oak has a circumference of nearly 86 inches, stands 72 feet tall and has a crown spread over 12 feet.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & INCLUSION

*Creating opportunities for residents to participate fully in the community and to experience all aspects of what it means to be an Arlingtonian is a central focus of many County programs. The level of involvement is an individual choice based on the person's interests, background and availability. For some residents it means participating as members of advisory groups, while for others it may be enjoying a special event or shopping at open-air or farmer's market. Community involvement is a treasured aspect of life in Arlington as reflected by the 32 advisory commissions, 11 review boards, 61 registered civic and citizen associations, and more than 100 community service organizations.*

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

#### **Neighborhood College Training Arlington's Future Civic Leaders**

In 2014, Arlington held two sessions of its annual Neighborhood College program, which is a free, eight-week civic engagement program.

Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, the spring session of the 2014 Neighborhood College attracted 27 participants and the fall/winter session had

25. The weekly sessions, presented simultaneously in Spanish, foster inclusion and engage new audiences.

Neighborhood College, a key component of Arlington's civic engagement infrastructure, seeks to strengthen the community by building broader, more diverse participation in Arlington's civic life. Its goal is to give Arlingtonians skills that will help them raise and address issues in their neighborhoods, or in the County as a whole, and to encourage their involvement in volunteer activities.

Nearly 300 participants have graduated from Neighborhood College since its inception in 2000. Many of those graduates have gone on to become neighborhood leaders. They serve on advisory groups and civic associations, lead special neighborhood improvement projects, and manage the development of Neighborhood Conservation plans.



*Volunteers who participated in the 2014 Point in Time Count of Arlington's homeless*

#### **Volunteer Arlington Task Group Formed**

In September, the County Manager announced the County was accepting applications for a new advisory task force to assess the Volunteer Arlington program.

The group's purpose is to determine if the program as it is currently structured, or another model, is the best way to serve volunteers and the non-profit and

government agencies who rely on their services. Specifically, the task force is responsible for providing recommendations to the County Manager, including whether or not to outsource the Volunteer Arlington program.

Its members include representatives of immigrant communities, non-profit organizations, and the business community. It also includes teen and adult volunteers. The task force will employ civic engagement methods and resources to involve the public. If it recommends outsourcing the program, it will help develop a request for proposals. If it does not recommend contracting out the function, it will develop recommendations for enhancing Volunteer Arlington within the given budget.



## INCLUSION

### Partnerships Bringing the Arts to the Community

Arlingtonians have diverse interests. Recognizing this, the County initiated, held or sponsored several imaginative programs worth highlighting.

In November, the County brought together regional arts professionals and artists for a two-day live-stream of the Creative Time Summit at George Mason University Founder's Hall in partnership with GMU's School of Arts Management and Women and Gender Studies programs. The Creative Time Summit highlighted innovative artists, activists, writers and curators presenting new strategies for social change.

Additionally, the County collaborated with Arlington Public Schools' New Directions Alternative High School Program for an outreach project in which the entire school participated in a hands-on workshop led by a local artist who is familiar with Arlington's public art collection. Throughout the fall, staff worked with a smaller group of students to learn about the collection. These students in time will lead tours of public art in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor for the rest of the school.

The program grew out of another 2014 accomplishment – the commissioning of black and white photographs of Arlington taken by APS high school students for the County Manager's Office at Courthouse Plaza, 2100 Clarendon Blvd. This marked the first time for

displaying students' artwork at Courthouse Plaza.



*Arlington student standing by his photograph on display in the County Manager's Office*

### Nauck/Green Valley Heritage Project Launched to Highlight Arlington's Past

Summer 2014 saw the Arlington Public Library's Center for Local History (CLH) launch the Nauck/Green Valley Heritage Project, a pilot



*Leonard "Doc" Muse, family, and friends at the unveiling of an historic plaque honoring the Green Valley Pharmacy*

program to preserve and present the history of south Arlington's Nauck neighborhood. The historically black Nauck neighborhood, with many residents who are descendants

of the original inhabitants of Freedman's Village, is a top

subject for research inquiries at the CLH. Yet, Nauck had been one of the least well-represented communities in the collection.

The Center for Local History originally planned to create a physical archive at Drew School, but changed course due to space and other limitations. Instead, the project leaders opted to create the archive online, allowing for the easy addition of electronic donations.

The electronic archive offers patrons and researchers many advantages, including the ease in adding family photographs without donors needing to forfeit the originals, and the ability to easily search for information.

The Nauck/Green Valley Heritage Project features more than 200 items in three collections, available to the community and others with an interest in history.

The Library created the Center for Local History in 2013 to replace the "Virginia Room." It is located at Central Library at 1015 N. Quincy St.

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## Arlington Reads 2014 Continuing the Legacy of “One-Theme, One-Community Initiative”

With the theme of “Dazed and Confused: Two Great Writers on Boomer Angst,” Arlington Reads 2014 presented the fictional worlds of Ann Beattie and Richard Ford, with both authors making special appearances in Arlington. The two share the ability to explore seemingly unremarkable situations with characters who share an underlying ambivalence about commitments, careers, relationships and themselves. On April 10, Beattie, interviewed by Library Director Diane Kresh, enthralled the Central Library audience with a discussion of how her short-form fiction, a regular feature in *The New Yorker*, captured the ennui of the generation that came of age in the 1960s and early '70s.

Library users who participated in an online discussion on the art of the short story received copies of the featured Ann Beattie collection, “*The New Yorker Stories*,” compliments of the Friends of the Arlington Public Library.

On April 24, acclaimed author Richard Ford spent the day in Arlington, visiting with literature students at Marymount University before an evening session at Central Library in front of an overflow crowd.

In an interview setting with PBS NewsHour’s Jeffrey Brown, Ford went into detail on his early struggles as a writer, the substantial differences between his life and his fiction, the origins of his Arlington Reads 2014 featured title “*The Sportswriter*,” and his dislike of the phrase “No problem.”

Arlington Reads is Arlington’s annual one-theme, one-community initiative to promote discussion and the joy of reading throughout the County.



*Author Richard Ford (l) at Central Library speaking with PBS NewsHour's Jeffery Brown*

## Summer Reading Still Popular in 2014

For Arlington’s young people, summer reading has become a celebrated Library-based program and tradition.

Registration for Summer Reading 2014 remained virtually identical to the record levels of 2013, with 8,000 young people from preschool to high school participating, which more than doubled the number of program registrations from 2007.

For 2014, 3,378 young people met their Summer Reading goals, with preschoolers and

elementary students reading at least 10 hours, and middle and high school students reading at least four to 12 books. That is at least 33,780 hours for the younger readers since the Library began using a time metric rather than the number of books read as in previous years. For middle and high school readers the Library still measures by the book, which means a minimum of 2,808 titles.

County staff conducted 52 special summer reading programs throughout the Library system, ranging from science and storytelling to teen t-shirt crafting. The Library also created and circulated seven STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) book and activity kits geared toward elementary students and their families.

On behalf of the students who completed Summer Reading 2014 goals, the Friends of the Arlington Public Library donated \$3,000 to the American Library Association’s Philippines Library Relief fund to help rebuild libraries and archives damaged in fall 2013 by Typhoon Haiyan. The support of the Friends of Arlington Public Library made the entire Summer Reading program possible.

## Fun for All Ages Available

July 22 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Department of Parks and Recreation, meaning the County for decades has offered programs that bring together diverse groups of people in leisure settings from senior adults to teens and younger.

The department's senior adult

program also celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of providing programs for adults age 55 and over. In 2014 alone, there were more than 1,236 senior programs offered in wellness, the arts, recreation, along with 2,800 fitness classes. Through the year, 243 Arlington senior adults enjoyed 13,430 lunches provided through the Congregate Nutrition Program, which also offered participants opportunities for social engagement and volunteering, which enhanced their overall health and well-being.

The number of teens enrolled in six after-school programs and three middle school-based clubs continued to increase. Teen activities such as the DJ Club and trips proved to be attractive, and by summer's end, there were more than 1,500 teens registered for the Teen Fitness Challenge program.

The success of the County's programs for younger children is evident in that for elementary after-school programs, 96 percent of

parents reported their children experienced increased assets in the areas of support, feeling valued and building social and cultural competency.



## Special Event Policy Updated



*A few of the thousands enjoying the County's July 4 celebration at Long Bridge Park*

The County issued 200 Special Event permits in 2014, and in July, the County Board approved an update to the County's Special Event Policy. The primary changes included amending the definition of "Special Event" to include organized events, pub-crawls, and social gatherings, the addition of text that addresses use and impact on public space and clarifies the phrase

"designed to attract large crowds" to events that have a tendency to draw large numbers of people.

The stimulus for the update was the growth in the number of pub-crawls in Arlington during recent years that attracted large crowds and increased demands on County services, particularly police presence.

County staff gathered information through an online survey and meetings with stakeholders to develop its recommendations for amending the policy. Some 1,130 people submitted comments to the online survey.

The County will continue to provide personnel and other services to support special events within resource limitations, and charge the organizer of each event on a total cost-recovery basis unless prohibited by law.



*Scene from the Marine Corps Marathon—one of Arlington's best-known special events*

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## SPECIAL EVENTS

Arlington residents and visitors had a number of opportunities to join their neighbors, celebrate special occasions and sample all the community has to offer. Some of this year's highlights include:

### *45<sup>th</sup> Annual Martin Luther King Tribute*

Hundreds honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and accomplishments at Arlington's 45th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute in January. The evening featured live music from the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Show Choir, dance from the Dance Project, and a keynote address from Freedom Rider and Civil Rights Activist Joan Mulholland. A special feature of the event was the volunteer fair to help Arlingtonians answer Dr. King's call to service.

### *Arlington Spring Invitational Soccer Tournament*

From the last week of February to early March, the Arlington Spring Invitational Soccer Tournament hosted more than 350 youth soccer teams, playing matches on eight of Arlington's synthetic turf fields. The tournament is the 4th ranked youth soccer tournament in Virginia, and 52<sup>nd</sup> in the country according to GotSoccer.com, a soccer software company and website.

### *First NoVa Teen Book Festival*

In partnership with One More Page Books, Fairfax Public Library and the Fall for the Book Festival, Arlington created the first annual NoVa Teen Book Festival. The event featured authors visiting nine area schools followed by a gathering of hundreds of young adult literature fans and dozens of popular young adult authors at Washington-Lee High School. A large book signing at Central Library capped the event.



*The Duke Ellington School of Arts Show Choir performed at the 45<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute in January*

## *Remembering Watergate, Nixon's Resignation*

Nearly 40 years to the day that President Richard Nixon left office, Arlington hosted a rare public appearance by acclaimed journalist Elizabeth Drew at Central Library on August 12. Drew was celebrating the reissue of her book "Washington Journal,"

considered the finest account of the Watergate scandal ever published. Central Library also

presented a display of Nixon and Watergate-related newspapers, campaign items, and pop culture collectables.

### *July 4 Celebration*

Arlington's third annual July 4 celebration at Long Bridge Park drew close to 10,000 people. The fun started at 4 p.m. with area food trucks offering their products, accompanied by free sports and lawn games, including kickball, bocce and cornhole. The live entertainment kicked off at 4:30 p.m. followed by viewing of the fireworks from the National Mall in Washington D.C.

### *2014 Arlington County Fair*

More than 50,000 people attended the 2014 Arlington County Fair. This year, the event expanded its 5K race and outdoor stage programming, there was a scavenger hunt and others participated in sporting events.

The County's indoor exhibit area was themed "Investing in Arlington's Future" and highlighted how Arlington is supporting youth, affordable housing, transportation and the environment. A

new component that highlighted fire and public safety inspired more than 125 people to register for Arlington Alert over the course of the event.



## CAPITAL PROGRAM

*Maintaining and improving the County's physical infrastructure is the focus of Arlington's capital program. The County continually reinvests in existing assets along with advancing new facilities, both of which are important to maintaining the County's vibrancy. In 2014, this meant the adoption of a new 10-year Capital Improvement Plan, parks and neighborhood improvements, completion of major road projects, the opening of a new training facility for the Fire Department, and the continued progress on the new comprehensive homelessness services center and more.*

### **Capital Improvement Plan Sets 10-Year Course for County Infrastructure**

The County Board's approval of the \$2.7-billion Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2015-2024 in July put in place a 10-year plan that maintains the County's existing infrastructure and provides for strategic investments in the future.

This prudent, financially sustainable strategy will help maintain the County's Triple-Aaa bond ratings as staff developed the plan with the goal of maintaining present facilities and acquiring new assets within the limits of the County's financial resources.

Highlights of the CIP include support for Arlington Public Schools' \$534.1 million plan to address growing enrollment; and \$1.1 billion for transportation and Metro costs and investments in the ART bus system, Columbia Pike Transit Stations, Capital Bikeshare, BikeArlington and Complete Streets projects.

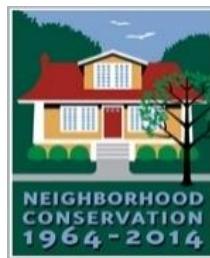
It also provides an estimated \$28 million for the replacement of the Lubber Run Recreation Center, and \$25.1 million for a fire station in North Arlington.

Other earmarks include funding for street paving, parks and facilities, water/sewer system infrastructure and storm water management.



*The CIP includes funding for park improvements such as this at Chestnut Hills*

### **Neighborhood Conservation Program Celebrates 50 Years of Improvements**



Arlington's Neighborhood Conservation Program has grown from three participating neighborhoods in 1964 to 50 today. In 2014, the program won approval from the County Board for approximately \$6 million for 10 new projects.

In February six projects totaling \$3.5 million were sanctioned: (1) \$724,042 for Glencarlyn street improvements; (2) \$135,317 for the Barcroft trail connector; (3) \$753,845 for the Waverly Hills pedestrian safety; (4) \$713,003 for Arlington Ridge street improvements; (5) \$380,369 for the Highland Park-Overlee Knolls streetlights/trail improvements, and (6) \$795,000 for the Waycroft Woodlawn park improvements.

Four additional projects totaling more than \$2.5 million won funding in September: (7) a \$608,749 pedestrian safety project for the Donaldson Run neighborhood; (8) a \$756,581 street improvement project for Arlington East Falls Church; (9) a \$798,845 park improvements project at Oakland Park, and (10) a \$376,000 park improvement project in Fairlington/Shirlington.

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## COMPLETED CAPITAL PROJECTS

### New Fire Department Training Facility Opens

In April, the County opened a new tactical training facility for the Fire Department at 2800 S. Taylor St. The \$4.9 million facility features a seven-story fire-training tower and a live burn building combined with a confined spaces training area.

The new tactical facility provides Arlington first responders with the most up-to-date training possible to help keep them and the community safe.

It offers a variety of structural designs to simulate commercial, residential, basement, mid-rise, and high-rise operations. Arlington firefighters can now practice controlling live fires, night operations, realistic rescue scenarios and stair and floor configurations. In addition, the County can simulate materials normally found in homes (wooden pallets and straw) during the live burning exercises.

Beyond the traditional fire fighter training, the new facility offers learning opportunities for other local and regional first responders, including technical rescue and hazardous materials and bomb team exercises.

Further, the new facility features a water filtration system that will treat all water used from the training exercises to protect Four Mile Run from unwanted water run-off.



*Firefighters training at the new tactical firefighting training facility that opened in April*

### Rocky Run Park –Now a Popular Community Asset



The County completed the renovation and upgrade of Rocky Run Park in the spring.

The project involved replacement and repositioning of all the park's major elements, and transformed an urban park with aging infrastructure, poor layout, and lack of accessibility into a popular new community asset thanks to the engagement of residents from the park's surrounding neighborhoods early on and throughout the process.

Rocky Run now features tot and school age playground equipment and picnic shelter located in the upper end of the site, two lighted hard-surface athletic courts, a lighted synthetic turf community field, fitness components and lawn areas in the middle and the lower portions of the park.

Enhanced site furnishings, improved accessibility and extensive landscaping throughout the park are additional features.

Lighting for the athletic courts and play fields is "dark sky" compliant, allowing minimal light spillage. The new synthetic turf replaces the old "stone dust" field, with new walkways that provide both access through the park and a circuit-walking path.

The new tot equipment features imaginative and creative play with a neighborhood street theme, sand play and swings. A large composite structure with rope bridges, net climbers and slides, spinners, and swings makes up the school age play area.

## Parks, Sports Facilities Improved

The County completed a number of parks and athletic facility improvement projects during 2014, including updating the Wakefield High School athletic turf field and replacing worn out apparatus with new state of the art equipment at a number of parks.

### *Wakefield Turf Field*

Wakefield High School replaced its synthetic turf athletic field and associated goal posts and amenities through the County's Synthetic Turf Program, which continues to focus on the replacement of existing synthetic turf fields.

The County and school system use the field for major high school and community sports programs including football, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey. The County funded the project in conjunction with Arlington Public Schools.



*New turf field at Wakefield High School*

### *Park Improvements*

Improvement projects at Fort Barnard, Lacy Woods and Glencarlyn parks also wrapped up. The upgrades at Fort Barnard, completed in the summer, include a redesigned playground and picnic shelter, new site furnishings, walkways, and landscaping. The new play equipment and other elements feature motifs of a fort and cannons.

At Lacey Woods, the work featured a new picnic shelter, picnic tables, grills, walkways and other site furnishings. Due to the sensitivity of the existing major tree canopy and natural resources in the park, the County designed the walkway to have minimal impact on trees and utilized tree

protection and construction techniques that will help ensure their survivability.

The work at Glencarlyn Park, finished in the fall, features a new playground for 5-12-year-olds, a sand play area with boulders, a climbing structure, swings and environmentally friendly features such as a native plant buffer and porous pavement. Other amenities include benches, picnic tables, and bicycle racks.



*Children enjoying the new playground at Glencarlyn Park*

At Towers Park, the lighted basketball, tennis and practice courts received upgrades. The tennis courts now meet NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) and United States Tennis Association standard dimensions. The new lights are "dark sky" compliant, reducing light spillage and glare. Other items included a new picnic shelter, accessible walkways, shade structure for tennis players, a portable restroom shelter and landscaping.

### **Clarendon-Barton Interim Open Space Transforms a Vacant Lot**

In 2013, the County entered into a 2-year lease with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea for free use of a vacant portion of their property on Clarendon Boulevard. In spring 2014, the County transformed the vacant lot into a dynamic, open space with flexible play and court space, a variety of seating opportunities, and landscaping for the community to enjoy. Lawn and gardens surround an inner plaza that features colorful tables with umbrellas and uniquely designed seating. More active park users can play a variety of outdoor games (including bocce) in the multi-use recreation area. Reclaimed materials from other sites make up the park along with moveable furnishings.

## Arlington Boulevard Interchange Project

In September, the County joined the Virginia Department of Transportation to celebrate the completion of the \$39 million Courthouse Road Interchange at Route 50.

The interchange features two new bridges at Courthouse Road and 10th Street, each with LED (Light-Emitting Diode) -lit metal grillwork displays; a left-exit from eastbound Route 50 onto North

Courthouse Road, and turning lanes from westbound Route 50 that are separated from the three lanes of moving traffic.

In addition, the sides of the highway feature a new public art feature of custom-designed concrete panels, making it the first state project to include extensive public artwork. The project also greatly enhanced the bike and pedestrian trail adjacent to the highway, with a new portion of trail built along the north side.

## Complete Street Projects Improving Access, Safety for All Traveling Arlington Streets

The County initiated the Neighborhood Complete Streets Program to develop safety and livability improvements on local streets. It builds upon the efforts of the Neighborhood Conservation Program and the former Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program to provide a framework for transportation improvements based upon community need. Highlights of projects completed in 2014 include the Pentagon City Multimodal Project and safety improvements in Ballston and Crystal City.

## Pentagon City Multimodal Project

In April, the County marked the completion of the Pentagon City Multimodal Project that improved the South Hayes Street corridor



*New and improved Arlington Boulevard Interchange*

between 15th Street South and Army Navy Drive and enhanced the area's accessibility and safety.

The improvements include upgraded traffic signals, designated mid-block crossing areas, sidewalks, crosswalks and lane markings, new street furniture, street and accent lighting and improved amenities for bicyclists, transit riders and pedestrians in the area. Bio-retention and rain garden

landscape features to manage stormwater runoff, and new street trees, and landscape enhancements round out the new elements.

## Crystal City, Ballston Street Improvements

The County completed the conversion of 12th Street South and Crystal Drive to two-way streets as outlined in the Crystal City Sector Plan, with new traffic signals, lighting, landscaping and bike facilities. Work also finished on pedestrian safety improvements on North Glebe Road at the intersections of Carlin Springs Road, Wilson Boulevard, and Fairfax Drive. The project includes upgraded crosswalks, signal improvements, new center islands, street lighting, sidewalk improvements and landscaping.



*Finished Glebe Road pedestrian safety project*

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## MAJOR PROJECTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

### Construction of Comprehensive Homeless Services Center Nearing Completion

In February, the Board approved a \$6.6 million contract to build out the Comprehensive Homeless Services Center (HSC), moving the Center closer to its expected opening in early 2015.

The work, now underway, features renovating and reconfiguring the interior of the building's second and third floors and enclosing the first floor breezeway. It also includes constructing a dormitory on the third floor, creating the Center's separate entrance with stairs and an elevator in the enclosed first floor space and a separate service elevator and stairs accessible from the service alley.

Other work will take place in the garage to reinforce the enclosed first level for future County uses and additional supports for the two new HSC elevators and stairs. The retail operations on the building's first and lower floors will continue throughout the construction with the tenants paying rent to the County.

County staff estimates that the final cost for the facility will be \$8.877 million, which includes the \$6.610 million construction authorization, \$1.508 million in soft costs (design and construction administration fees, permits and inspections), and \$0.758 million for furnishings and security and technology equipment.



*A point-in-time look at construction inside of the Comprehensive Homeless Service Center*

### Columbia Pike Street Improvements Get a Boost



*A view of Columbia Pike*

In September, the County Board approved up to \$5.6 million for additional design services within an existing contract for the Columbia Pike Multimodal Project. The action allows the County to develop the final design of street improvements along 3.5 miles of Columbia Pike.

The multimodal project will make Columbia Pike a safer, more accessible route for all users. As part of an ongoing effort to revitalize the Pike, Arlington is transforming this main thoroughfare into a complete street that balances all modes of travel.

The contract is part of the \$79 million Columbia Pike Street, Utility Design and Construction Program that uses funding from regional sources and local commercial real estate tax revenues solely dedicated to new transportation projects. The project ultimately will widen sidewalks and underground utilities for the entire length of Columbia Pike. Other changes include the installation of new left turn lanes at four intersections (South Quincy, South Randolph, South Taylor/Thomas, and South Frederick streets) and upgrading of water and sewer lines to accommodate current and planned development.

In addition to visible improvements to the road, extensive work is occurring below the roadway to replace aging and leak-prone water and sewer pipes and bury existing overhead utilities underground.

## Pentagon City Pedestrian Tunnel Renovation Almost There

The County is progressing in its effort to create another entry into the Pentagon Metrorail station by opening an abandoned 1986 pedestrian tunnel that never opened.

The tunnel, when unopened, will provide pedestrian access from stairs at the northeast corner of South Hayes Street-12th Street South to Metro's Pentagon City Metrorail station mezzanine.



*Construction scene at the Pentagon City pedestrian tunnel*

Construction includes repair and commissioning of the existing unused pedestrian tunnel entrance located at the intersection of 12th Street South and South Hayes Street.

Construction for Phase I of the project started in September 2014. Phase II started in December 2014 and will be completed by the end of March 2015.

The Pentagon City Metrorail station is one of the busiest in Northern Virginia. It also provides access to many retail, government, and commercial office buildings, and serves as a transfer point for regional and local transit buses and many private bus services.

Transportation officials estimate that by 2030 the station will have 37,000 entries and exits daily. Many of those riders will be able to access the station through the newly opened tunnel.

## Streetlight Program Continues LED Conversion

Making roadways safe, environmentally friendly, while reducing energy consumption and light pollution, is an ongoing focus for the County.

To this end, the County has converted 85 percent of Arlington street lights to LED (Light-Emitting Diode) technology.

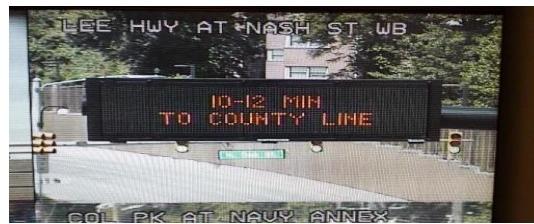


This year, the County continued to expand the program from the older technology, as well as tested innovations from the manufacturer to improve light quality and reduce light pollution in residential neighborhoods.

The LED technology reduces electric power consumption by approximately 75 percent, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent from the previous lighting technology.

## Improvements to Transportation Safety, Efficiency Continued

The County currently has two efforts underway to improve transportation operations, emergency response and incident management. First, the County added monitoring cameras at approximately 25 intersections this year, increasing the total number of monitored locations in Arlington to approximately 180. Second, work continued on the effort to install fiber optic lines to improve the speed and quality of the transportation monitoring/messaging infrastructure.



## COUNTY & SCHOOL COLLABORATION

*Arlington County Government and Arlington Public Schools are two distinct entities that share the common objectives of ensuring a quality education for Arlington residents and supporting the schools system's goals, students and teachers. Examples of this partnership include the County providing staffing for school health centers, school resource officers, fleet management services and joint-use facilities. In addition, in 2014, as part of the Fiscal Year 2015 Operating Budget, the County Board increased support for Arlington students to greater than \$19,000 per pupil – more than any other school district in the National Capital Area region.*

### County, Schools Join to Secure McKinley School Proposal Approval

The County Board in September approved a request from Arlington Public Schools for a use permit for new additions and renovations for the McKinley Elementary School campus. The project is another example of the County working with the school system to alleviate student overcrowding through the orderly approval of school expansion and construction projects. The proposal's public review process took less than a year to complete.

The school system plans to build approximately 40,445 square feet of new space at the school, including approximately 33,040 gross square feet - at the northeast corner of the existing building (the primary addition) that will provide 10 new classrooms, two new art rooms, and two new music rooms.

The other additions include approximately 6,261 gross square feet to replace the existing five-sided addition on the southwest corner of the school (the secondary addition), and a 1,175 gross square foot addition to renovate and expand the main entry and school administration offices on the east side of the school.



An artist rendering of the new entrance of the renovated McKinley Elementary School

The project also features demolition of 8,835 square feet in the gymnasium and pentagon wing for a net increase of about 32, 250 square feet that will result in an expanded gymnasium large enough to accommodate the entire school community.

### Public Land for Public Schools

In May, as part of the Public Land for Public Good initiative, the County Manager

identified three sites that could serve Arlington Public Schools (APS) needs in accommodating a growing school population: Wilson School, Thomas Jefferson Middle School and the Career Center.

Using the same data set of 678 properties studied for the affordable housing component of the initiative, County and school staff performed an analysis to identify sites best suited to meet APS' objectives. They used evaluation criteria that included land area greater than 3.5 acres, a school site of at least one acre adjacent to County Board-owned property, transit access and central location within the County. Like the affordable housing component of the initiative, staff will establish timelines for a special planning study and/or a special exception process for each potential site.

## **Thomas Jefferson Working Group Appointed**

In July, the County Board appointed a 20-member working group to join County staff in evaluating the feasibility of building a new elementary school on a portion of the Thomas Jefferson (TJ) site. The County is involved in the process because parts of the park and the school are located on County owned/controlled land.

The group made up of representatives from nearby civic associations, Arlington Public Schools and representatives of appointed advisory boards and commissions began its work in September with the expectation of presenting recommendations to the Board in January 2015.



*Participants at a TJ Working Group open house*

The Board has charged the group with choosing between two possible conclusions or alternatives. The first alternative is to recommend siting a new school at a particular location within the TJ site, and develop conditions and design principles to address the site and neighborhood context as well as to mitigate impacts on existing public areas and uses. Alternative 2 is to advise against building a new school at TJ based on specific findings.

The group also must factor in the County's identified goals for the location in their deliberations. Those goals are to retain the current wooded eastern end of "TJ Park" as is, maintain a cohesive park and ensure no significant loss of green space and no net loss of recreational programming. Others include consideration of the neighborhood impacts of traffic and parking and ensure safety of existing pedestrian walkways and bikeways; pledge that the community center would remain available

for use and confirm the building massing is compatible with the adjacent neighborhood.

APS identified the Thomas Jefferson site as the "preferred" option for a new elementary school. However, school officials stated in their Capital Improvement Plan that their second choice is to construct additions to two South Arlington elementary schools—later identified as Barcroft and Randolph schools

## **FitArlington Places Healthy Vending Machines in Schools**

FitArlington, the County's health and fitness initiative, collaborated with Arlington Public Schools (APS) to replace school vending machines with healthier options for both students and staff.

FitArlington is a countywide initiative to promote a culture of wellness. Funded in part by a grant from the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, 115 new FitArlington healthy vending machines are now dispensing an array of nutritional snacks and beverages at all 40 APS buildings.

Visitors to Arlington community centers, libraries, sports facilities and government buildings can take advantage of these machines as well, as they are now available in most County facilities. Arlington's "best practice" in healthy vending has drawn national attention.



*FitArlington healthy vending machines*

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Arlington's four public safety agencies — Police and Fire Departments, Office of Emergency Management and the Sheriff's Office — ensure the safety of the community and provide a coordinated response to emergencies. Combined, the four agencies' 1,122 sworn officers and civilian employees provide a safe environment for Arlington's 215,000 residents. Through the years, each agency has grown more innovative in its approach. In 2014, innovation continued with the upgrading of the County's dispatching system to reduce response times and joining regional efforts increase information sharing.

### Building Owners Recognized for Being a Part of the First Responder Network

The concern for public safety and the expectation of reliable and broad communication in Arlington poses a new challenge for the County's public safety – adequate indoor radio coverage for first responders.

This is due to new construction materials that reduce the ability of public safety personnel to communicate with radios within buildings, and older technology not accommodating new video and digital data transmissions.

In October 2013, the County Board recognized the evolution of building construction and its impact on wireless communications by adopting a resolution that mandates distributed antenna systems in County facilities and encourages the business and residential communities to implement their own standards. To date, three County facilities and a small number of commercial and residential properties use, or will use, these systems to enhance public safety communications.



Plaque displayed at buildings part of the First Responder Network



Arlington's public safety joint honor guard at the County's annual 9-11 commemoration

In April, Arlington's public safety chiefs presented Monday Properties (for 1812 N. Moore Street) and Penzance (for 3001/3003 Washington Blvd.) with the County's First Responder Network certifications – public safety operable communications – within a commercial building. The network enables public safety officials to communicate within the building during any emergency.

### Arlington Part of Regional Rollout of New Alert System

In June, the County participated in the National Capital Region's rollout of a new, enhanced emergency warning alert system—Everbridge. The County now uses the system as a platform for the Arlington Alert and Employee Alert notification systems.

With the new structure, residents and visitors now have up to eight options for receiving information, and can choose which notifications to receive and specify times during the day to block alerts. As an added feature, people can register to receive alerts from multiple areas.

The County implemented an internal and external campaign promoting the new system as part of the regional approach, and it remains an ongoing effort.

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## Detention Center Wins Federal Certification for New Jail Safety Standards

The U.S. Department of Justice in August recognized the Arlington County Detention Facility as the first jail in the National Capital Region to win certification for meeting national safety benchmarks, specifically Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards.



(L to R): Major David Kidwell, Major Mike Pinson, PREA Auditor Lt. Gerald Grogan, Sheriff Beth Arthur, Chief Deputy Paul Larson and Capt. Jimmie Barrett

The certification is confirmation of the County's commitment to operating a safe and secure jail for inmates and staff, and dedication to the safety of the Arlington community.

The intent of the PREA is to prevent, detect and respond to sexual abuse that occurs in confinement settings. The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission finalized national standards for facilities in 2012.

As part of the certification process, the Department of Justice reviewed the Detention Center's policies, practices, and infrastructure and interviewed staff and inmates to assess the facility's overall organizational culture.

Under PREA standards, all confinement sites require an audit every three years. These facilities include adult prisons and jails, and community confinement and juvenile facilities, lockups, whether operated by the Department of Justice or a unit of a state or local government or corporate or nonprofit authority.

## Police Department Participating in Regional Video Data Sharing Agreement

The County entered into a regional agreement for video data sharing following the County Board's authorization for the Police Department's participation in September.

By entering into the agreement, Arlington now will have access to Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras throughout the National Capital Region during planned special events or unexpected emergencies and disasters.

The Board also approved the Police Department's acceptance of equipment through a 2013 Urban Area Security Initiatives (UASI) grant in order to share and access video. The purpose of the UASI initiative is to create a robust and interconnected CCTV network in the region, to secure critical infrastructure, and to facilitate real-time monitoring of events utilizing shared cameras from multiple organizations in one interface and assist with event monitoring and incident response.

All of the equipment associated with the project is available at no cost to the County, along with installation, maintenance and product support.

Jurisdictions within the NCR are joining the program in order to share their video as well as have access to other jurisdiction's real-time video feeds. First responders used the camera system in 2013 for situational awareness during the Marine Corps Marathon.



## Operation Rescue Ready Provided Teens a Look at Emergency Operations



Arlington teens participating in Operation Rescue Ready

More than 100 teens gathered at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center in June to participate in Operation Rescue Ready, a hands-on, emergency response scenario alongside Arlington's public safety and emergency response teams and staff from the American Red Cross. This was the first such event in the County.

The teens took part in a real-time disaster drill, learned how an Emergency Operations Center works, and the importance of utilizing many different County agencies to assist during an emergency. They also received an opportunity to practice CPR chest compressions and learn about careers in fire rescue, police, and with the Red Cross. At the end of the event, they walked away better prepared for an emergency.

The County also sponsored a number of other emergency exercises during the year, including three emergency table top exercises held for the business community and a three-hour table top exercise for County agencies and a long-term care facility, which provided an opportunity to discuss the County's sheltering plan.

Additionally, the County hosted the Center for

Homeland Security and Defense for a Homeland Security Executive Education seminar for County leadership.



## School Bus Monitoring System Provides a New Enforcement Tool

In September, the County Board approved the school system's request to amend the County's Motor Vehicles and Traffic Code to allow for a school bus video monitoring system to record motorists passing stopped school buses.

However, while Board members expressed support for increasing safety by installing the cameras, they asked the County Manager to develop a County policy governing the capture, storage, access, and sharing of video images in public spaces before the ordinance amendment takes effect on February 1, 2015.



In addition, the County and the school system will collaborate on a public education campaign to notify the public of the new ordinance. Once the policy is in place, APS (Arlington Public Schools) will select a vendor to supply and install the equipment and operate the system at no cost to APS.

In return, APS will enter into a revenue-sharing agreement with the vendor, and will reimburse the Police Department for its review of the camera footage. During the system's first month of operation, violators will receive warning tickets. After the warning period, APS will receive the revenue for its programs.

The passing of a stopped school bus with a flashing signal is a violation of the Code of Virginia 46.2-844. In 2011, Virginia amended the traffic code to authorize municipalities to adopt ordinances that allow school districts to place cameras on buses to record drivers passing stopped school buses that have flashing red signals and the stop arm extended.

## FITNESS & HEALTH

The importance of fitness and health is a long-standing focus for Arlington. The County was one of the first nationwide to take the National Recreation and Park Association's "Commit to Health" pledge that includes following the Healthy Eating Physical Activity standards for after-school programs and summer camps. The County also leveraged a grant from Kaiser Permanente to initiate a pilot program to increase County residents' physical activity. These programs are in addition to the County's fitness facilities, ongoing sports leagues and regular class offerings.

### Arlington Teens Help the White House Celebrate

Seventeen Arlington campers joined First Lady Michele Obama at the White House in July to celebrate the first anniversary of the Let's Move,



*Arlington Campers at the White House*

Camp. Many are also members of the Arlington Kids in Action after school program. Both programs focus on fun, safe, and enriching options for children that involve healthy snacks, active programming and opportunities to help children learn to make healthy diet and activity choices.

As another facet of Arlington's community health promotion efforts, the County received \$14,750 from Kaiser Permanente for a pilot "Arlington Parks and Rec Rx" program to increase fitness levels of Arlington residents by having medical professionals prescribe physical activity and provide residents a customized resource using parks and community centers.

Drink Up campaign. The Drink Up initiative encourages Americans to drink more water, more often. The youngsters were part of the Carver Community Center Summer Expedition

### Record Number of Arlingtonians Compete in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics

A record number of 135 Arlington seniors competed in the 2014 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics, joining nearly 800 other senior adults in the competition.

This was a 20 percent increase from Arlington residents and a 10 percent overall increase in the total number of competitors. The participants competed in more than 50 events. Arlingtonians won 102 medals while competing in age groups divided by five and 10-year increments.



*Arlington offers a wide variety of fitness activities for active adults*

The fact that Arlington residents dominated the competition is not surprising. For 60 years, the County has offered fitness programs for residents age 55 and older. These programs range from seated exercise to weight training and a variety of sports activities and specialty classes. For instance, in May the County sponsored the second annual 55+ Fitness Day; participants enjoyed a day of free demos and fitness activities.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ADVANCEMENTS

*While most are aware of Arlington's services, only a few knowingly encounter the programs that form the County's administrative infrastructure, or the behind-the-scenes operations conducted to make sure resources are in place for service delivery. Like any other part of the organization, the administrative services network is constantly looking for ways to enhance customer service from improved communications to providing safety programs for employees. During 2014, the County introduced several notable administrative advancements ranging from new ways for residents to report problems to a new intranet and secure cloud storage solution for County employees.*

### Arlington Joins "Ban the Box" Movement to Open Job Opportunities

In November, Arlington joined the "Banning the Box" movement to eliminate queries about

  
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criminal convictions on the County's employment applications, as such questions can be a

barrier to employment for anyone with a criminal record. The move reinforces the County's commitment to fair hiring practices.

The County eliminated the question regarding criminal convictions on the initial application for positions not related to public safety. It also removed the question regarding a DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) or DUI (Driving under the Influence) conviction on the initial application, provided the job does not rely on driving as a part of the job or for public safety positions.

Hiring panels or supervisors may still ask questions regarding criminal convictions at the time of the interview and non-public safety candidates may be required to sign a statement that they have had no convictions in the last three years. Alternatively, if they do have a conviction, they may provide a written explanation regarding the offense. The County will continue to perform background checks for everyone selected for a position prior to employment and will notify applicants of the practice.

Arlington joins Virginia localities such as the City of Alexandria, Newport News, Norfolk, Petersburg and Richmond in this initiative.

### Employee Safety Highlighted

Fiscal year 2014 marked significant expansion of the County's Employee Safety Program.

Countywide, the number of U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordable injuries dropped by 35 percent, and while the number of injuries rose by 5 percent, the severity of those injuries dropped by 22 percent.

The Chesapeake Region Safety Council named the Department of Parks and Recreation a "2014 Champion of Safety" and recognized it as the 2014 "Most Improved" safety program for a government agency. Additionally, County employees participated in 35 safety workshops presented as part of the second annual countywide Safety Days event that individual departments supplemented by enhancing their individual safety focus.

The Department of Environmental Services (DES), for example, implemented a Safety Observation Tour Policy that formalized safety management and codified incident investigation with a focus on root-cause analysis and measurable corrective action plans to prevent recurrences. These efforts resulted in a five percent drop in DES's recordable injuries during the year with just 38 reported, while medical claims' cost and severity were down by 70 percent from the previous year, both the lowest in five years. The number of preventable motor vehicle accidents also dropped by 12 percent during the period.



## COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS

### New Arlington County Website Launched

In 2014, the County completed a move to a simpler, more functional, topic-focused County website

([www.arlingtonva.us](http://www.arlingtonva.us))

that uses open-source technology.

The new site is more user-centric and delivers new features.

It is mobile-friendly and responds differently on tablets, phones, and desktops.

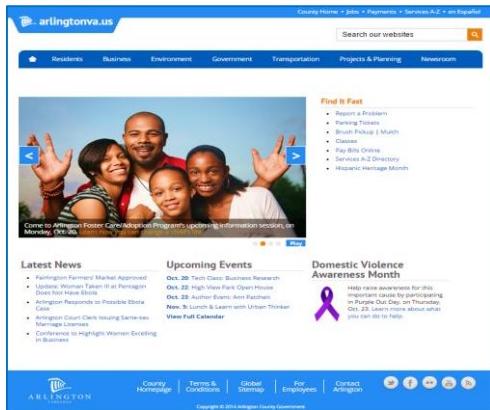
The project utilized a process that relied on web usage analytics (where people go on the current site and mobile user statistics), user testing and employee input.

#### *Innovative Approaches*

Arlington is likely the only local government in the U.S. to move its whole website from a propriety content management system to WordPress, an open-source technology that uses the County's custom-built theme and templates. The website hosting on Amazon Web Services was a big procurement innovation, as the cost for the site is usage-based and the County has a cancel-at-anytime contract.

#### *Sites Features*

Examples of the topic-focused (versus department-centric) areas include a "Housing" area that combines information from two different departments; an "Environment" section that brings together information from three different agencies; and the "Projects and Planning" area that combines information from multiple departments. Additional enhancements provide users easy access to some of the most popular sites such as Recycling or Trash, Parks, and the Calendar of Events. In addition, site visitors have access to more online forms.



## Cost Savings & Efficiencies

The project had a strong return on investment.

The County now has significantly lower annual/operating costs (~\$75K vs. ~\$250K), and the project will have paid for itself in less than 24 months.

### Mobile App, Website Proven to be Popular Reporting Tools

In February, the ArlingtonVA mobile app and accompanying "[Report a Problem](#)" website launched, providing increased customer service and transparency. This new tool

consolidates in one place many common items or problems that residents report, such as broken meters, damaged signs, trash, or recycling issues. Other tool features and capabilities allow users and County staff to:

- Easily include photos with the service request, providing more detail to County staff.
- Track requests and receive updates with a unique tracking ID (once the user has created an account).
- Use GPS (Global Positioning System) or a location service on a mobile device to report precise locations, or it can be entered manually.
- Route online service requests automatically to the correct County division (so people do not have to know which department handles an issue).
- Quickly access Arlington news, the A to Z directory and other information.

As of September, users have downloaded the app more than 2,000 times. Use of the website and mobile app has been significant since their launch. In the first nine months, users submitted thousands of requests through the tool. Requests via the website typically outnumber the mobile app requests (roughly 75 percent to 25 percent).

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## New Planning + Building eNews Launched

In July, the County launched the Planning + Building eNews, a monthly news push detailing initiatives, procedures and policies changes that could affect the land development process in Arlington.

The County published eNews as a pilot project in response to a request from the development and business community wanting timely, relevant information delivered to their inboxes.

Since the launch of eNews, its subscriber list has grown to 390 contacts with an open rate of 46 percent (people reading the news emails). Due to the success of the pilot, eNews is now a permanent part of the County's public information program. The public can subscribe to eNews on the County's Projects & Planning webpages and Building Arlington website.

## Building Arlington Website Undergoes Major Revision

The Building Arlington website, launched in 2012, serves the customers of the Inspection Services and Zoning divisions, providing information on building in Arlington.

New in 2014, the Building Arlington homepage underwent a major revision, streamlining and redesigning the page based on analytics and internal and external customer feedback, including the addition of two customer engagement tools. The first was the real-time "Wait Times" module that allows customers to see the current wait time to meet with a permit specialist. The second was adding logic to the "Contact Us" email box, which directs the most frequently asked inquiries to the teams that can best answer them, reducing the main inbox burden from 10-15 emails a day to only 1-2 a day, if not less.

In 2014, the website had approximately 260,184 total visits and 172,013 unique visitors, averaging 712 visits daily. This marks an increase in all areas over 2013 stats: a 25 percent upsurge in total visits, a 31 percent rise in unique visitors and 25 percent growth in daily average visits.

## OTHER ADVANCEMENTS

### O365 Provides Employees Productivity Edge

The County introduced AC Commons, built on the Microsoft O365 cloud platform, for Arlington County employees in September 2014. The County instituted the latest version of Office software, a new Intranet, collaborative workspace, web conferencing and a secure cloud storage solution. These tools work together to increase employee productivity by making it easier for them to do their jobs, and has enabled the County to decommission expensive and out of date equipment.

O365, in addition, provides users with robust records management functionality, enhanced security, intuitive design and an enterprise search engine, making it faster and easier for employees to find relevant information.

This solution also supports the County's mobile first approach, in that the offerings are accessible anytime, anywhere, and via any device.



### New Mapping Application Introduced

Thanks to a new mapping application introduced in July, County residents and others can now download dozens of mapping data layers at no cost from the Mapping Center's internet site; previously, residents could only purchase a data CD for \$125. The new open data model has garnered positive feedback from residents, staff and other localities.

In addition, residents and staff now can use a new mapping tool software to conduct simple geospatial analysis with dozens of commonly used data layers plus historical and current aerial photographs. As a result, the interactive maps on the County's website are easy to use on both desktop and mobile devices.

## AWARDS & HONORS

*During 2014, Arlington programs and employees received a number of awards for excellence. This is nothing new as Arlington County Government has earned a reputation for being an innovative and progressive organization not afraid to try something new or to look ahead to the future to ensure the delivery of quality services for its constituencies. These awards celebrated Arlington's work in leadership or management, environmental services, technology, communications and library services.*

### ORGANIZATIONAL HONORS

#### Arlington Named Top 7“ Intelligent Community”



The Intelligent Community Forum in January named Arlington as one of the Top 7 Intelligent Communities in the world for 2014. Arlington was one of only two communities in the

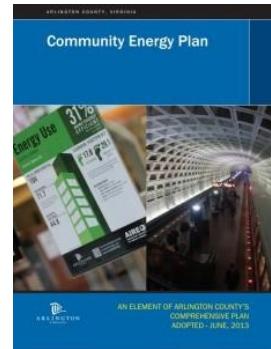
United States to achieve this honor. The Forum also named three communities from Canada and two from Taiwan. This is the second time Arlington has achieved the Top 7 ranking.

The Intelligent Community Forum noted Arlington's construction of its own fiber-optic network as an example of how the County is working to "re-energize government-business-university collaboration." The think tank also noted Arlington's "forward-looking planning," highlighting the County creation of high-density economic growth in the Metro corridors while preserving quiet residential neighborhoods and parks/open space. Another factor in the designation was Arlington's successful economic ecosystem and collaboration between government-business-university to lead the innovation economy.

As a follow-up, the Forum in October named Arlington one of the world's Smart21 Communities of 2015. The County is one of only four communities in the United States to achieve the honor, and is now in contention for the prestigious designation of Intelligent Community when awarded in June 2015.

#### Energy Plan Wins National Environmental Planning Award

The American Planning Association (APA) in January named the County's Community Energy Plan winner of the 2014 National Planning Achievement Award in Environmental Planning. The award "honors efforts to create greener communities that



reduce the impact of development on the natural environment and improve environmental quality." The APA's National Planning Awards are the profession's highest honor.

The Community Energy Plan (CEP) is a new element of the Arlington County's Comprehensive Plan. The CEP addresses all major aspects of energy generation, use and distribution in Arlington between now and 2050. The overarching goal is to reduce the community's greenhouse gas emissions by more than 70 percent by 2050.

#### Recycling Program Wins Leadership Award

Arlington County received the award for "Outstanding Leadership" in May from the Virginia Recycling Association for notable waste reduction efforts. The association (VRA) recognizes the best programs in waste reduction, recycling and litter prevention.

## **Suburb of the Future is Here**

Salon.com recognized Arlington County as “the suburb of the future,” and noted how Arlington “avoided the worst of suburbanization and revealed the path toward sustainable urban development.” The article hailed Arlington for its foresight — thanks to community

consensus in the 1960s to support high-density zones and underground Metro stations — in becoming a thriving, walkable city.

## **Columbia Pike Planning Initiative Named “Best Corridor Plan”**

The Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) in June awarded the County’s Columbia Pike Initiative, designed to transform the Columbia Pike area to a walkable mixed-used main street, its 2014 “Best Corridor Plan.” CNU recognized Arlington’s efforts to transform the Columbia Pike area into a walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-used main street. The Columbia Pike Initiative Plan and Columbia Pike Neighborhoods Area Plan, along with two Form Based Codes, provide direction for reinvestment and urban redevelopment, while preserving affordable housing and creating a mixed-income community. Since the late 1990s, the County has collaborated with residents, community leaders and business owners to plan the corridor’s revitalization.

## **Arlington Named Top Ten Digital County**

The Center for Digital Government’s 2014 Digital Counties Survey ranked Arlington as one of the top ten digital counties in the nation. The award, announced in July, recognizes leading counties using innovative information and communications technology to improve services, boost efficiencies and save money.



*County Planning staff honored for their work on the Columbia Pike Initiative*

## **County Makes List of Best Places to Live**

In September, Livability.com named Arlington as one of the top 10 of the Top 100 Best Places to Live.

Livability.com evaluated more than 2000 cities for the study, which analyzed communities on data points ranging from economics and housing to education and health care. Arlington took the #3 spot in the nation, out ranking all other jurisdiction in the DC Metro region.

Livability.com worked with the Martin Prosperity Institute on the research, analyzing more than 40 data points, grouped into eight categories – economics; housing; amenities; infrastructure; demographics; social and civic capital, education, and health care that were weighted based on an exclusive survey.

## **Top Biking Award**

Bicycling Magazine again in September named Arlington as one of the Top 50 Bike-Friendly Cities in the nation, citing the County’s real-time bike counters on trails, bike shops, community connections and the Air Force Association Cycling Classic.

## **Human Resources Department Wins Award**

Arlington’s Human Resources Department in September received the 2014 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Excellence in Work Place Effectiveness and Flexibility. The award recognizes organizations for use of effective workplace strategies to increase business and employee success, and is part of the national *When Work Works* project administered by the Families and Work Institute and the Society for Human Resource Management.



## Platinum Green Community

Arlington received its sixth "Go Green Virginia" award from the Virginia Association of Counties in October. The award recognizes environmental policies and practice actions that reduce carbon emissions and save money. Arlington earned the highest certification of Platinum with a perfect score of 200.



*Promoting the use of Green Roofs is part the County's award-winning environmental efforts*

## No. 1 Starting Place for Young Entrepreneurs

The financial planning website NerdWallet in November ranked Arlington the No. 1 place for young adults to start a business. According to the site, Arlington tops the list of Best Cities for Young Entrepreneurs for several reasons, including access to funds, networking and mentorship and the local economy with a low unemployment rate and a high per capita income.

Nearly 28 percent of Arlington's residents are 25 to 34 years old, and at least 74 percent of all residents over 25 hold a bachelor's degree or higher — both of those figures are the highest in the nation. The District is the only other local jurisdiction to make NerdWallet's top 20 for young entrepreneurs, coming in at No. 14.

## Columbia Pike Housing Efforts Win State Honors

Arlington won two state awards in November for efforts to preserve affordable housing and meet housing needs along Columbia Pike. At the 2014 Governor's Housing Conference, the Columbia Pike Planning Initiative won the "Best



*Arlington Mill Residencies honored for "Best Housing Development" at the Governor's Housing Conference*

in My Backyard 'IMBY'" award. Arlington Mill Residences, a joint effort with Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, took home the award for the "Best Housing Development." The awards recognize statewide excellence and innovation in meeting housing needs.

## Marketing Campaign Strikes Gold with Communicator Award

The International Academy of Visual Arts honored Arlington Economic Development's "Intersections" campaign with a Gold Award, its highest honor. The Academy recognizes outstanding achievements in marketing and communications and annually receives over 6,000 entries in 10 disciplines, including design and print, integrated campaigns, web marketing, and more.

The "Think Arlington: Intersections" campaign demonstrates the wide variety of industries and companies located in Arlington and highlights the county's many culturally rich amenities.



*One of the ads used in Arlington's "Intersections" campaign*

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## **Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE) Wins American Graphic Design Award**

Graphic Design USA awarded the AIRE booklet a Certificate of Excellence in the brochure + collateral category.

The American Graphic Design Awards competition began in 1963 and honors outstanding work of all kinds. There were 8,000 entries and only 15 percent of those received an award.

The Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE) is dedicated to achieving the County's ambitious emissions goal. The program's managers envision an Arlington in which residents and businesses save money by owning and operating more energy-efficient homes and buildings. New businesses and residents come to the County for innovative, competitive edge and vibrant community services powered by cleaner and more reliable energy. Everyone breathes healthier air by using clean energy and a variety of alternatives to driving.

### **Justice Center Earns Energy Star Rating**

Arlington Justice Center earned the EPA's ENERGY STAR certification. Completed in late 2009, an energy- and water-saving performance contract updated lighting, HVAC (heating, ventilating and air condition) controls and water fixtures to contemporary best practice. The County also installed heat recovery ventilators.

These improvements, combined with on-going monitoring of building systems, pushed the energy performance of this complex over the threshold to qualify for the ENERGY STAR for superior energy performance. Energy Star buildings have proven to save energy and money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Transportation Programs Win Communications Awards**

The County's transportation marketing efforts won two major communications awards. The County's ARTists for PAL Bus Design Contest won the Virginia Transit Association's Outstanding Public Transportation Marketing Campaign award. In addition, the Countless Car-Free Trips

campaign won the Communicator Silver Award of Distinction in the Online Video – Branded Content – Green/Eco-Friendly categories.

### **Library Wins Multiple Awards**

Arlington Library is highly respected as evident in the three awards it garnered during the year. For the second straight year, Library Journal named Arlington Public Library one of six "Star" public libraries in Virginia. The Journal awards rankings based on per capita statistics: library visits, circulation, program attendance and public Internet computer use.

Additionally, the American Library Association's PR Xchange Committee named the Library a 2014 Best of Show Award Winner from in the category of Materials Promoting Collections—electronic. The winning entry was prepared in partnership with Arlington TV, highlighting the Library's Center for Local History work in "preserving Arlington stories."

The American Library Association's Public Awareness Committee awarded the Library a National Library Week grant from Scholastic Library Publishing. Libraries used the grant to develop a public information campaign to encourage usage by young professionals, new Americans/immigrants and teens.



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## INDIVIDUAL

### County Manager Named Visionary Leader

Arlington County Manager Barbara Donnellan received the 2014 Visionary Leadership Award, a prize that recognizes top government officials for their outstanding contributions to metropolitan Washington and their home jurisdictions.



*County Manager Barbra Donnellan receiving the Visionary Leadership Award*

The Institute for Regional Excellence at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) sponsors the award. "Donnellan has been a tireless advocate for regional cooperation and collaboration on many fronts," said Chuck Bean, COG's executive director. "Many of the Region's achievements have been realized because of Barbara's experience and dedication."

### Communications Director Invited to Address Preparedness Summit

Arlington's Communications Director Diana Sun presented her Master's thesis at the 2014 Mississippi Preparedness Summit in Biloxi, MS. Her thesis, "High-Tech, Low-Tech, No-Tech: Communications Strategies during Blackouts," was honored with the Outstanding Thesis Award from the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security. Ms. Sun earned a Master's degree in Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate School in December 2013.

Sun's presentation discussed how emergency managers could communicate vital information when disaster strikes and there is a loss of power for extended periods.

### Child & Family Services Chief Honored

Dr. Heather Stowe, Chief of the Department of Human Services' Child and Family Services Division, received the 2014 Allies in Prevention award from SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now) of Northern Virginia.

Dr. Stowe's belief that "families are the experts on themselves, and their voice needs to be elevated in all aspects of planning and treatment" has shifted practice within the agency and has truly strengthened Arlington families, said SCAN.

### Housing Development Specialist Named in Top 40 Under 40

The Virginia Housing Coalition (VHC) recognized Sarah Pizzo, a County Housing Development Specialist, as one of the Top 40 under 40 in Housing. The award honors young talent for professional excellence in affordable housing.

Pizzo has 13 years of experience in affordable housing; and has facilitated the approval of nearly \$50 million in funding for eight projects with 800 affordable units.

### Construction Plans Examiner Honored

The Virginia Plumbing and Mechanical Inspectors Association awarded Shawn Strausbaugh, a construction plans examiner, the Jack A. Proctor, Sr. Code Development Leadership Award. The award recognizes personnel who are actively involved in the construction code development process at the state, national, and international levels.

### Emergency Communications Awards

The Arlington Chamber of Commerce presented valor awards to Emergency Communications Technicians Rachel Moreno and Heather Horan for their professionalism, and the exceptional life-saving measures they took when handling a fire incident on April 1, 2013.



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